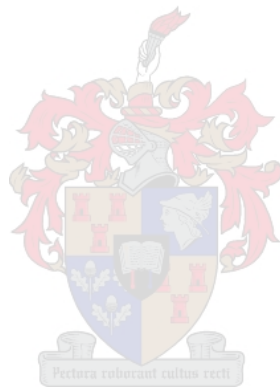


‘Mission: Heartstone’ – Creating a Physical Theatre Performance by Incorporating South African Sign Language

by

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*Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
MA in Drama and Theatre Studies in the Faculty of
Arts and Social Sciences, Drama Department at the University of Stellenbosch.*

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract

Sign Language awareness is rapidly increasing throughout the world. One reason for this is the constant attempt to incorporate Sign Language into political, social and cultural spaces. South Africa is quickly joining this cultural and linguistic movement. This arts-based research describes the process of incorporating South African Sign Language (SASL) and British Sign Language (BSL) in the creation process of a Physical Theatre approached performance. The study examines mime, puppetry, object theatre, improvisation and contact improvisation as building blocks within the Physical Theatre process and indicates how a Sign Language can be related to and incorporated in these practises. These practises are discussed in relation to the characters and scenes in the performance creation and production of *Mission: Heartstone*. The study describes how the all-hearing cast, with no prior knowledge of SASL or BSL, experienced working with this visuospatial language. As part of the research, an alternative style script, mainly focusing on the Sign Language used in the production, is included. The study concludes with the discussion of how, jointly, Physical Theatre and Sign Language can be used as a creative impulse to create theatre.

Opsomming

Die bewustheid van Gebaretaal is vining besig om wêreldwyd toe te neem. Een van die redes hiervoor, is die voordurende pogings om Gebaretaal in politiese, sosiale en kulturele ruimtes te gebruik. Suid-Afrika is besig om hierdie kulturele en taalkundige neiging na te volg. Hierdie kunsgebaseerde navorsing poog om te beskryf hoe Suid-Afrikaanse Gebaretaal (SASL) en Britse Gebaretaal (BSL), in die skeppingsproses van 'n Fisiese Teater benaderde opvoering, opvoering, geïnkorporeer is. Dit ondersoek mimiek, poppespel, objekteater, improvisasie en kontak improvisasie as boustene in die Fisiese Teater proses, en hoe 'n Gebaretaal mees effektief daarby ingeskakel kan word. Hierdie praktyke word bespreek in verhouding tot die karakters en tonele, in die skep en opvoering van '*Mission: Heartstone*'. Die studie beskryf die ervarings van die horende akteurs, met geen vooraf kennis van SASL of BSL nie, met hierdie visu-ruimtelike taal. As deel van die navorsing is daar 'n alternatiewe styl geskrif ingesluit, wat hoofsaaklik gemik is op die Gebaretaal in die produksie. Die studie word afgesluit met die bespreking van hoe Fisiese Teater en Gebaretaal gesamentlik, suksesvol gebruik kan word as 'n kreatiewe impuls om teater te skep.

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1.1 Chapter One: Background

1.1.1 A Brief Personal Introduction

From an early age I had an affinity towards languages. Born into a South African family with parents from both English and Afrikaans speaking backgrounds, it was natural for me to easily acquire these two languages. I use English and Afrikaans as my primary spoken and written languages for communication.

My primary school and high school offered me the opportunity to learn Xhosa and German. At university, there were a variety of other languages available to studying: from French to Latin to Mandarin. Most tertiary educational institutions offer the opportunity to learn an additional language, which in turn offers a new way of thinking and reasoning. However, these languages share a similar trait – they are all written and spoken languages.

I have always had a keen interest in Sign Language, but it was only during the last five years that I have actively been exposed to the theoretical and practical aspects of this form of communication. There were no opportunities in my pre-university years to learn a Sign Language. In 2018, Stellenbosch University introduced an introductory course to South African Sign Language (SASL): Sign Language Acquisition 178, as well as a third-year module, Sign Language Linguistics 318. To improve my knowledge of SASL and Sign Languages, I registered for both modules in 2019. My interest in SASL has drastically increased over this short period of time, especially in the theatre and performance industry.

Theatre and performance have always been a part of my life. From a young age I was taking part in performance and visual art Eisteddfods, playing in church bands, and attending extra art and drama classes. In high school, I took Dramatic Arts as a subject of choice. During those years I developed a relatively negative perception of Physical Theatre. To me, it was conveyed as a style that was only suitable for the physically active and capable, for

example gymnasts, dancers and sportsmen who had the flexibility and strength to perform physically taxing routines. I, being none of the above, had no interest or intention of pursuing the style further at a tertiary level. As an undergraduate of Drama and Theatre Studies student, I was required to complete Movement modules. These classes introduced me to Anel Joubert¹, Estelle Olivier² and Doctor Samantha Prigge-Pienaar³. The initial first two years of Movement was filled with ups and downs (physically and emotionally). All acting students were required to complete the same modules in their first and second year, and to finally specialise in two ‘blocks’⁴ in their third year. After an informative theoretical module about the methods and uses of Physical Theatre, and the chance to be involved on a practical level by working with the Physical Theatre subject head Dr Prigge-Pienaar, my opinion about the ‘style’ changed. She helped me realise the powerful potential of Physical Theatre as a process. I better understood how Physical Theatre was a form of theatre which focused more

¹ Anel Joubert is currently a Movement lecturer at *Stellenbosch University*, working with first to third years. She has extensive practical and theoretical training in contact improvisation. She obtained her MA (Drama) in 2006 with her thesis titled: *Die tegniek van geen tegniek: 'n ondersoek na kontak improvisasie in Suid-Afrika, met spesiale verwysing na die werk van Lanon Prigge en Samantha Pienaar*.

² Estelle Olivier (née Botha) is the current undergraduate programme (second and final year) co-ordinator at *Stellenbosch University*. She is also a lecturer for Movement and Physical Theatre. She obtained her MA (Drama) at *Stellenbosch University*, with her thesis titled: *Where dance and drama meet again: aspects of the expressive body in the 20th century*.

³ Doctor Samantha Prigge-Pienaar left *Stellenbosch University* during 2018. She was the Physical Theatre and Movement subject developer, co-ordinator and lecturer, and post graduate co-ordinator during my 2015 to 2017 undergraduate years. She obtained her PhD in 2015 from *Stellenbosch University*, with her submitted thesis: *Contact improvisation as a foundational learning tool for contemporary performers: singular complexity*.

⁴ A ‘block’ is merely the term we used to describe a subject, which we could choose ourselves. The available blocks for acting students were: Media, Directing, Applied Theatre, Cabaret, Physical Theatre, Acting, Writing, and Puppetry.

on the body than the voice to create a show and bring a message across (Joubert, 2006: p. 4) – and that, to practise Physical Theatre, one does not have to follow a strict set of rules; that there is no imperfect body for the form. My experiences with her encouraged me to specialise in Directing and Physical Theatre.

While exploring in Movement/Physical Theatre classes and working on a departmental Physical Theatre show, *Unfettered* (directed and facilitated by Dr Prigge-Pienaar in 2017), I discovered one of my more natural body languages was that of gestural work. For a solo part in the performance, I stood on a rostrum and told my version of the Little Red Riding Hood story. I leant towards using my hands, upper body and facial expressions to tell the story. This led to me developing a similar piece of work - I developed a foot-stationary piece for my end of semester practical for Physical Theatre. I explored the aspect of time, it's passing, and my perception of a timekeeper (or 'Father Time'). In both performances, gestural work dominated the style of movement I used. When I began learning more about SASL, it occurred to me how many of the gestures I had been using (as a speaking person) were actually signs in SASL. If I connected the signs in Little Red Riding Hood to SASL, I would have used signs such as KNEAD (dough), FLOWER, WINDOW, KNOCK and TEETH. In my 'Father Time' exam, gestures that were also SASL signs included: MAN, CROWN, TRIANGLE, WATCH, TIME and LISTEN. As I learn more SASL, the more I realise how a gesture is not merely a gesture, but another language, and how a SASL speaker might have understood those performances just as a hearing person, and maybe even better.

My Honours article explored *De la Bat School for the Deaf's* SASL performance of *William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet*. I investigated how adaptation as a tool of translation manifested, and how performative elements were elevated in the performance. After seeing the possibilities SASL had to offer for a classical work such as Shakespeare, I wanted to

create my own show, using the influences of Sign Language. The idea of creating a piece of work using a Physical Theatre outlook, and incorporating SASL, seemed only natural.

1.2 Review of Current Literature

As my research is arts based driven, I shall divert from the traditional setup of a literature review. I shall discuss various methods and ways of working within a Physical Theatre orientated process.

1.2.1 Physical Theatre

1.2.1.1 Physical Theatre Influencers Around the World (Excluding South Africa)

Just as I used to, many people think Physical Theatre is merely a performance which is high in physicality – a piece where performers need to be fit and athletic and capable of physically demanding activities. However, unlike classical ballet or opera, Physical Theatre cannot be easily classified, as it draws on many influences and differs drastically within each ensemble, as well as country to country. Instead of trying to give a clear and concise definition for Physical Theatre, I rather want to research the different perspectives that theatre companies have, and attempt to apply some of their methods, or draw inspiration from their practices. In the following paragraphs, I shall briefly mention several larger Physical Theatre orientated companies that have influenced many teaching institutions worldwide. Some of these practises will function as a lineage of practice for me. As I am inexperienced, and not yet comfortable to develop my own unique methods from scratch, I shall draw on some of these company's methods and ideals to influence my own practice during this process.

1986 saw the birth of one of the most well-known and successful Physical Theatre companies in the world. ***Dance Visual 8***, or ***DV8 Physical Theatre***, was founded in London in 1986 by Lloyd Newson, Michelle Richecoeur and Nigel Charnock. The British Council describe DV8's work as a company that is constantly "taking risks, aesthetically and

physically, about breaking down the barriers between dance and theatre and, above all, communicating ideas and feelings clearly and unpretentiously” (DV8 Physical Theatre, 2016). *DV8* does not have a fixed troupe of performers. When a production is being cast, Newson casts performers who he believes will contribute the most to the vision of the production. This allows for new influences and a diversity of performers within the *DV8* company (DV8 Physical Theatre, 2018).

DV8 was the first Physical Theatre company I came to know. Unable to see the performances live, I have only seen recordings of *Can We Talk About This?* (2011 - 2012), *John* (2014 - 2015), *The Cost of Living* (2004 film) and *To Be Straight With You* (2007 - 2009). The simplicity and elegance of the work fascinated me. *DV8* only uses improvisation in their rehearsal period – for performances, choreography is completely set. Their moves are fitted to their words. Although I am not against improvising in performance, I firmly believe performers must know exactly what they should do and be confident in their movements, so that if something does change or ‘go wrong’, they can easily find their way back to a point of safety. I would like my performers to be as comfortable with their moves as possible – so that if something happened, they would not feel extreme pressure and tension in trying to come back from the mistake.

Frantic Assembly was founded in Swansea, Wales, in 1994 by Scott Graham, Steven Hoggett and Vicky Middleton. Their motto is “theatre with no fear”. From “dynamic and brutal” to “proudly tender and fragile”, *Frantic Assembly* has experimented with a wide variety of textures in theatre, television and film (Frantic Assembly, 2018). They have collaborated with *Canvas*⁵, to create *Choke*, which is based on William Shakespeare’s *Othello*, and they are the Movement Directors of the *Olivier* and *Tony* award-winning

⁵ *Canvas* is a *YouTube* initiative sponsored by the *Arts Council of England*, where art and performances are posted online.

production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nigh-Time*, produced by *The National Theatre*. *Frantic Assembly* has many resources available to students and practitioners on devising theatre. They discuss their process and how they elicit movement – from practically exploring on the floor to filling in questionnaires. They have too, worked with British Sign Language (BSL). As they have explored BSL with Physical Theatre, it is natural I turn to their company for a starting point (making them my potential main lineage of practice focus). I shall use many of their described exercises from their ‘The Frantic Assembly book of devising theatre’ (2009) as a basis for my exercises in developing a new production. Though they are not exercises from specific BSL influenced shows, their general practises will be a basis for my Physical Theatre exercises.

Bone Marrow Theatre is based in Melbourne, Australia. Nadine Dimitrievitch founded the company after completing her course in Paris, at world renown Physical Theatre and mime school *L’École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq* in 2012 (Bone Marrow Theatre, 2019). In 2013, her performance *Exodus* premiered at *Melbourne Fringe*. *Bone Marrow Theatre* is influenced using the chorus, mask-work, dance and circus arts. They periodically have neutral mask courses and physical comedy workshops. As dance is often incorporated into Physical Theatre performances, should my performers have any dance training, it would be interesting to find ways to incorporate their skills in the eventual production.

Finally, in 2012, ***Clockfire Theatre Company*** was founded by Emily Ayoub, Roze Delaney, Gareth Rickards and Kate Worsley. Many of the ensemble performers studied at the *Jacques Lecoq Theatre School*, also incorporating Lecoq’s perception of Physical Theatre and mime/circus arts. The company offers workshops for students and professionals (Clockfire Theatre Company, 2017).

Bone Marrow Theatre and *Clockfire Theatre Company* both have an interest in creating work using mime/cirque techniques. It will be interesting to give the cast various impulsive mime improvisations. Mime exercise will be explored to incorporate the element of mime and circus arts in the performance process. This would make them focus on the body and face, as opposed to the words. This will be further expanded on in Chapter 2.

1.2.1.1 Physical Theatre's History in South Africa

Professor Gary Gordon⁶ is seen as a founding father of Physical Theatre in South Africa. He brought many influences from overseas back to South Africa. He completed his undergraduate in South Africa, however he completed his Master's degree in choreography at the world renown *London Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance*. During Gordon's time at *Laban*, he participated in workshops led by DV8's Lloyd Newson. He taught both vocal and movement classes at the *Lee Strasberg Studio* in London (1991-1992), as well as gave guest lectures at the *Tulane University* in New Orleans (2009). He has experience in choreography, contemporary dancing, ballet, physical performance, Butoh (a form of Japanese modern dance theatre) and 'digital installations' (Rhodes University, 2018 & Sichel, 2010: p. 42).

In 1993, Gordon founded the *First Physical Theatre Company* in South Africa – this was the first company of its kind. He has since collaborated with many performers and writers over the years, developing a Physical Theatre platform in South Africa. Sichel (2010: p. 43) comments:

“theatrical elements, probing aesthetics and local textures were defining characteristics of what became the highly influential First Physical Theatre Company. Other hallmarks were, and still are, the use of issue-based or deeply personal text; heightened physicality;

⁶ Gary Gordon is Professor Emeritus of the Drama Department of the *Rhodes University* in Grahamstown, South Africa.

corporeal mime in certain instances (as in Andrew and Janet Buckland's oeuvre); the exploration of the South African cultural heritage (as in Gordon's *Bessie's Head*); themes of identity; use of multimedia and most importantly intrinsic choreographic research."

Grahamstown became a bustling hub for theatre practitioners and performers interested in Physical Theatre. Antrobus and Jeanette (2011: p. 329) collected data at the 2009 *National Arts Festival* in Grahamstown to monitor and review the consumption of theatre at the festival, specifically that of Physical Theatre shows. They describe Physical Theatre as "largely experimental, somewhat indistinct category of theatre, ranging from dance-theatre to mime to physical comedy to contemporary performance" (Antrobus & Jeanette, 2011: p. 331).

Fleishman (1997) examines the relationship between words and actions in a performance of Athol Fugard's *My Children! My Africa!* One comparison he makes between Western Theatre and South African Theatre is the weight of the written text and the actor's body: Western Theatre has the traditional habit of placing all its meaning in the words of a play and thereafter meaning is assigned to the body, while in South African Theatre the body "serves" as part of the meaning and text (Fleishman, 1997: p. 201).

In May 2015, Dr Samantha Prigge-Pienaar conceptualised and directed a children's theatre production. *The Paper Circus*, a show of 75-95 minutes, followed the story of an old ringmaster, searching for a circus (Keet, 2015). Dr Prigge-Pienaar approached this performance with the knowledge of an experienced Physical Theatre performer and lecturer. Avoiding pre-existing material and text heavy scenes, the show was moulded by the collaboration of Dr Prigge-Pienaar and the cast, which produced a show that contained mime, dance, puppetry, masks, origami and sound effects. In 2017, Dr Prigge-Pienaar also directed *Unfettered*. This Physical Theatre performance was not intentionally aimed at children, unlike *The Paper Circus*. However, it drew inspiration from fairy-tales, and made use of

gestural work and excluded any spoken words. I was fortunate enough to be part of the process of creating the show. I shall incorporate this knowledge and apply it to my practice-led research.

These few Physical Theatre orientated companies and practitioners are unique in their own way. They each place emphasis on different aspect of performance goals and process aims - whether this be the training technique, the origin of their texts, the sort of cast and artistic team that is being looked for, etcetera. This emphasis leads to unique companies and work.

1.2.2 *Sign Language*

1.2.2.1 South African Sign Language in Entertainment

In the last couple of years, the awareness of SASL in the entertainment and education industry has drastically increased.

FTH:K was founded by Tanya Surtees and Rob Murray in 2006⁷. The company has developed several highly visual performances throughout the years, incorporating masks, and clowning in their Physical Theatre process. *Ek Roep Vir Jou Vanaand* (2009) was the companies first all-Deaf show. It followed the story of a young man's struggles and conflicts with his father. He attempts to forget the past, however, a strange abandoned baby at his front door forces him to face his childhood memories and his relationship with his deceased father. Alongside the Physical Theatre process of developing the performance, shadow puppetry, clowning, soundscapes and 'non-verbal performance' was used (Skinner, 2009). *Shortcuts* (2010) did not make use of any spoken dialogue and all the actors were Deaf as well (FTH:K,

⁷ Surtees and Murray were collaborating since 2004, however, the company was only officially established in 2006 (FTH:K, 2019: About, Founders).

2019). The performance consisted of several everyday circumstances that people face. These scenarios were explored using mask work. The masks varied in visuals and sizes: masks from small red clown-noses to full facial masks were used to explore. Actions such as ‘pour’ and objects such as ‘(drinking) glass’ were mimed, or signed, the way the corresponding words would be signed in SASL. *FTH:K* produced the very first full-length performance where deaf and hearing clowns performed together (in South Africa), *Gumbo* (FTH:K, 2019). It premiered in 2006. The story revolves around a bet gone wrong, where a father must give up his daughter to an innkeeper (who has a deaf son, whom he shuns) to marry. The terrified young girl and son develop a means of communicating with each other (simple SASL) and their friendship quickly blooms. These kinds of performances opened the theatre world for many young deaf children and allowed them to see that anyone can be part of the arts (Goldstone, 2015).

On the 5th of December 2013, former South African president Nelson Mandela, passed away. His memorial service was held on the 15th of December 2018. During the televised ceremony, Thamsanqa Jantjie was hired as the official SASL interpreter. However, SASL signers called Jantjie out as a fake interpreter. Jantjie had no training in SASL and instead was merely creating obscure gestures. This event inspired Sophie Woolley (writer), Andile Vellem (choreographer) and Gemma Fairlie (director) to collaborate on the 2017 theatre production *The Fake Interpreter* (Wolley, 2017).

The *South African Shakespeare School Festival* has created a platform for deaf school participants to watch performances, and later enter performances into the festival. During the 2015 *Shakespeare Schools Festival*, sixteen learners from the Cape Town-based *Dominican School for the Deaf* (Wittebome) arrived two hours before the performance, so that SASL interpreters could explain the plot of the plays to them, prior to the performance (eNews Channel Africa, 2015). During the performance, there was interpretation. Worcester’s *De la*

Bat School for the Deaf entered an adaptation of *William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet* in the 2018 *Shakespeare Schools Festival*. Instead of having a separate interpreter, the play was performed in SASL (and no spoken language). These kinds of shows are not only important because they act as study resource for hard-of-hearing and deaf individuals, but also because they add to the limited deaf entertainment collection in South Africa.

This type of performance requires the translation of a written script (of a spoken language) to a performed language. This is a challenging and lengthy process. Many deaf people struggle with reading a language, as they have never heard the sounds and rhythm/inflections of the language before (Marais, 2018: p. 31). The letters on the page are all arbitrary symbols. To thus read a script and fully understand it the first time it is read, is not an easy task. It is even more difficult when, for example, a Shakespeare script must be translated, because deaf individuals cannot rely on knowledge of sounds to assist them in understanding an older form of English.

Schools for the Deaf currently have a few DVDs with SASL poems being signed, for their SASL subject. In 2018, Professor Frenette Southwood⁸, in collaboration with several SASL and English/Afrikaans translators, the Stellenbosch Language Centre SASL interpreters and willing performers, have filmed a number of short SASL dramas which will be used in the *Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements* (CAPS) education in Deaf schools. These short films vary in length, depending on the year group they are aimed at.

⁸ Professor Frenette Southwood is a lecturer in the Department of General Linguistics at *Stellenbosch University*. She teaches child language development and neurolinguistics.

1.3 Problem, Focus and Goals

The majority of shows produced in South Africa are aimed at a hearing audience. For example, in children's theatre⁹: shows often follow a similar pattern in South Africa. These shows share many features – they are often musicals, have larger-than-life characters and many of them are based on pre-existing fairy-tales and storybooks. The shows follow a linear narrative and are text/language driven. Though these shows are entertaining and successful, there is a stagnation in the style of theatre and stories we present to the children in South Africa. Most of these plays are in English or Afrikaans (with sometimes the exception of a bilingual plays). These popular shows generally do not cater for children who do not speak the language the play is in. South Africa has eleven official languages and many more unofficial languages. With so many languages to communicate it, it is no wonder there is often miscommunication between people and that people often feel their languages are neglected.

Likewise, if there is no SASL translation available, deaf audiences will not be able to fully enjoy the show. There is already very little theatre available for the deaf community. Though many hard-of-hearing and deaf people learn to lipread, it is difficult to concentrate on the other features of a production. Deaf people have never heard English or Afrikaans (or any other language) spoken before. The movement of lips and the letters of a language are arbitrary. The intention of the lines an actor says is also lost, because a deaf person cannot hear how an actor is leading the audience using tone, pitch and volume. If an audience member is unable to understand the spoken language on stage – although they may see the events on stage, because of the text/lyrics that they do not understand, they miss out on the full experience of the show.

⁹ When I refer to children's theatre in this thesis, I am referring to theatre made for children, performed by adult actors.

As with varieties of spoken/written languages, Sign Languages too differ. There is no universal standard dialect of English, for example. General American English differs from General South African English, which differs from General British English. Within American English there are dialects and accents ranging from New York to Southern to Atlantic Canadian. So too, Sign Languages differ from country to country, and different cultures influence various Sign Languages (Wazalwar & Shrawankar, 2017: p. 896). However, because Sign Language makes use of iconicity for many of the signs, there are often signs that are easier understood. Addendum B contains an example and explanation of various terms used to describe a sign. The following videos in this section have been found on the *Spread The Sign* website: to access the videos, follow the link provided in the footnote.¹⁰

WALL

In British Sign Language (BSL), the sign is: four selected fingers, extended and spread, open thumb, with an outwards palm and horizontal facing fingers, slightly to the side of the body in neutral space, with a vertical downward movement. The word ‘wall’ is mouthed. In Russian Sign Language (РЖЯ), the sign is: four selected fingers, extended and together, closed thumb, with an inward facing palm and horizontal facing fingers, to the side of the body in neutral space, with a vertical downward movement. Part of the word ‘стена’ is mouthed. Spanish Sign Language (LSE) uses the same handshape and movement as РЖЯ, however part of the word ‘pared’ is mouthed. In Indian (English) Sign Language, the signer uses both hands. The dominant hand is four selected fingers, extended and together, open thumb, with horizontal facing fingers. It creates a repetitive sweep upwards motion on the

¹⁰ *Spread The Sign* (<https://www.spreadthesign.com/isl.intl/search/>) is a ‘multilingual dictionary for Sign Languages’, which stores various signs and basic sentences in a number of different languages (Spread The Sign, 2018). To find specific signs, merely type in the word (for example WALL, CAT, COW) in the search bar and search. Thereafter, select the flag or language which you wish to see the sign in.

weak hand's palm (such as building a wall up). The weak hand is four selected fingers, extended and spread, open thumb with vertical facing fingers, without movement. The palms face towards each other. These examples give visual indications of what the general wall looks like – a line which divides.

CAT

In SASL and BSL, the sign is: both hands mirroring each other's movement. It is four selected fingers, bent and spread, open thumb, with horizontal facing fingers. The palms are facing inwards, and the signer moves the hands from each side of their mouth horizontally away from the face. The word 'cat' is mouthed. ASL and PЖЯ use a single SASL F-handshape¹¹, which repetitively flicks horizontally from the side of the mouth (the thumb closest to the mouth). 'Cat' is mouthed in SASL, and 'кошка' is mouthed in PЖЯ. These signs represent the whiskers of a cat.

COW

In BSL and SASL, both hands mirror each other. The hand is pinkie finger selected, extended and open thumb. The thumbs connect with either side of the head's temples and flips upwards. The movement causes a change in palm orientation – from downward to outwards. 'Cow' is mouthed. ASL does the same as BSL, but with a single hand. In Pakistan (Urdu) Sign Language (PSL), the initial sign is practically the same as in BSL – however, there is a reduction in the initial movement as the sign does not flip because it starts with palms facing outwards. There is also an added component: after creating the horns the signer uses both hands to make the movement of milking a cow in the neutral space. 'گاے/gaaye' is mouthed. These signs represent a cow, by showing the horns, and in PSL case, the milking action.

¹¹ For the SASL fingerspelling alphabet I use to describe the above handshapes, see Addendum C.

These kinds of sign are created by matching the sign to the object. This makes it easier for signers of different languages to communicate, as well as for a deaf signer to communicate with a hearing person.

Ngema focused on the using the body as a form of communication in *Asinamali*, in hopes of bridging the diverse and dynamic language gap that South African audiences face. By using a Physical Theatre approach and limiting the use of spoken language - and if successful - it may remove the barrier away of language that many people, and children, face. As it will not be in English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, etcetera, the images will be most important. Fleishman (1997: p. 202) quotes Mbongeni Ngema's thoughts on the physical image: "I wanted to develop a style of theatre that would communicate with anyone anywhere in the world, that would bridge the barriers of language and culture, something in which the body tells the story much more than the words".

1.4 Research Question

In my Honours article I concluded that making use of Sign Language in theatre is one way of creating a more universal theatre. Instead of a spoken language, a visual approach should be taken Sign Language contains iconicity and non-manual features (such as facial expressions) that make it easier to understand than a spoken language (Marias, 2018: p. 32). Because Physical Theatre already places emphasis on the body, and SASL is a visual body language, combining these two elements seems natural.

I suggest approaching a new piece of work from the angle of Physical Theatre. Physical Theatre places importance on the human body, before any of the other 'tricks and gimmicks' in theatre. The body and face¹², through exploration and emphasised use of

¹² By mentioning the face specifically, I want to draw emphasis to the importance facial expressions play in communicating in Sign Language.

movement, should tell a story. Within this theatre form, other styles such as mime, movement, dance, clowning, and puppetry can be used. Instead of portraying a story verbally word for word to an audience, they would have to interpret and understand the images in their own way (instead of being told what they should understand). By reducing the amount of verbal language, it should help make the performance more accessible to all language groups.

This leads me to question: how the practices of Physical Theatre can be combined with the use of South African Sign Language to develop a performance that is based on conventional signs and gestural work (as opposed to the spoken/written text), to create a (more) universal theatre language.

1.5 Methodology

The results of this study are conducted through arts-based research. I chose this methodology as it actively engages both participants and researcher. It helps the participants feel invested in the research (Wilson & Flicker, 2014: pp. 3-4). Arts-based research methods are also popular in the social sciences because they yield detailed qualitative data that “capture[s] the reflexive, insightful and creative capacities of participants” (Wilson & Flicker, 2014: p. 2).

As I am a Master’s student and used university students as my performers, I engaged with a practice-led research method: creative work in a university environment (Smith & Dean, 2009: p. 2). Gattenhof and Radvan (2009: p. 219) comment: “One of the basic tenets of working in this mode requires the research focus to emerge out of the practice and then respond reflectively through practice”. This creative process of developing a performance can contribute new knowledge to the drama and linguistic field (Smith & Dean, 2009: p. 44). The research can manifest through many methods.

As there was a practical component to my research, one arts-based method used was drama and performance. The performance was developed over a period of about two months.

I asked my participants to keep a journal of their thoughts of the process (reflective practices). Although I preferred the journaling to resemble diary entries, I was aware there may have been components of poetry, creative writing, drawing and other art-based methods that a participant would feel more comfortable with, to diaries their experiences (Wilson & Flicker, 2014: p. 4).

At the end of the process, I asked my participants for their journal entries. If they record their entries digitally, I stored those files on a personal external hard-drive, which only I have access to. If the participants recorded their entries in a hard-copy book, I retrieved the hard-copies from them and stored them in a personal cupboard space.

I made use of video recording the participants during rehearsals. These recordings were available to show participants what they are doing and to critically examine both the participants as well as the work being produced. If we wanted to find a specific handshape, or felt something was not working well, we could turn to the video recording to examine it. The files were stored on my personal external hard-drive. Selected material was available to view if the participants wanted.

The aim of the performance was to use elements of SASL and Physical Theatre practises to create a performance which was understandable and relatable to audiences of all ages and cultures, and all hearing abilities¹³. One method of assessing the success and flaws of the production was that of informal conversations with audience members and other professional theatre makers that saw the performances.

During rehearsals, I used exercises that previous practitioners have used, bringing lineage of prior practice into my methodology as I had not devised or directed a piece like this before and did not have much experience of my own. For example, I researched practises

¹³ In the end, the audience who attended the show had a variety of ages and cultures – all who seemed to enjoy the show. Unfortunately, there were no hearing-impaired audience members.

and practical exercises which Graham and Hoggett describe in their 2009 published ‘The Frantic Assembly book of devising theatre’. The book contained detailed descriptions of activities that were used by ensembles to create material for their performances. I attempted to apply their methods in rehearsals, and hopefully found a way to mould their methods to suit my cast and me. Another source filled with appropriate exercises was Muir and Hammond’s ‘LAMDA: Mime and Improvisation’ book, published in 1997. There were exercises giving focus to facial expressions, the hands, conveying environmental characteristics and so forth.

Alongside my arts-based research, I used traditional research methods. My research sources (including books, articles and websites) provided me with exercises that could be used in a Physical Theatre process. It informed the research regarding existing Sign Language entertainment, and what is lacking therein. Through the research and source studies, problems in existing processes were highlighted. From this production’s process, I was able to expand on similar, or other, obstacles which arise within situations where the Physical Theatre process is used in conjunction with Sign Language.

1.6 Ethical Consideration

Wilson and Flicker (2014: pp. 7-8) discuss ethical concerns associated with arts-based research methods. While anonymity and confidentiality are important in conventional research, in some cases participating artists may prefer and choose to be credited by their name when work they are involved in is published. There may also be disputes regarding the ownership and rights of the work created, should the research become profitable. Participants may also agree to sharing their art/contribution on one platform, but not another (such as they may approve it being displayed in a thesis, but not on an online journal). The following must be kept in mind when considering ethical consent: “consent to participate in the research”,

“whether and how to disseminate products” and “appropriate attribution (e.g. whether or not to be anonymous)” (Wilson & Flicker, 2014: p. 8).

This study required voluntary human participants. The study had a low risk ethical impact. The only foreseeable risk was one of discomfort – such as being identifiable when the process of creating the performance is discussed. This discomfort was assessed and decreased (when requested by participants) using various means of creating anonymity. The three performances, however, are in the public domain. The participants were informed about this, and as performers they were aware that their performances would be in the public domain. As *Stellenbosch University* owns the work, should they have had any reservations about the process or production, ultimately it would need to be discussed and cleared with the university.

My participants were selected during an audition process that took place between 30 January 2019 – 1 February 2019. The participants of the study were undergraduate Drama and Theatre Studies students in the Drama Department of *Stellenbosch University* (eighteen years and older). I aimed to cast five to six performers – depending on the interest in the study and the performers auditioning. This number was easily adjustable for me. I was looking for participants who showed an affinity to movement and were comfortable exploring with their bodies. They were enthusiastic individuals who were willing to explore performance styles that they may not have worked with before (for example: puppetry and mime). See Addendum A for the consent form that were used for participants.

1.7 Limitations

The biggest limitation I faced in this study was my lack of fluency in SASL. To improve my knowledge on and skills in the language, I completed two courses at *Stellenbosch University*. The university currently offers Sign Language Linguistics 178 and 318 courses. The lecturers

of the Sign Language Linguistics 178 module, Modiegi Njeyiyana (also currently an MA student at the university) and Zulfah Shabodien are both deaf and fluent in SASL. Being in their class allowed me the opportunity to inquire about specific vocabulary by Modiegi and Zulfah, as they are much more knowledgeable about the vocabulary of SASL. Taking the course allowed me the opportunity practice and interact with SASL, signers and give me new vocabulary that was helpful for the performance.

I have met a few teachers from Worcester's *De la Bat School for the Deaf* and Wynberg's *Dominican School for the Deaf* at the short course 'Poetry in the Classroom: The Acquisition of Literacy in the Context of Deafness' presented by Anne Baker¹⁴ and Modiegi Njeyiyana in July 2018. During 2018 I had the opportunity to assist Professor Frenette Southwood on set while filming SASL short stories. These people have knowledge and skills regarding SASL which I did not possess at the beginning of this research. I hoped that should I have struggled, there would be the possibility that I could seek assistance and gain input from them. There are also several online video sources in SASL – though limited, they are available. The vocabulary is limited however, and I was aware of the possibility of having to work with more than one Sign Language. To my knowledge, ASL and BSL are the most accessible Sign Languages as there are many sites and video materials available online to access as sources.

My and the cast's lack of fluency in SASL also limited the fluency and smoothness of our ability to produce coherent sentences in SASL. None of us had the ability to form coherent, grammatically correct sentences, and thus made use of individual signs. This was jarring to work with at times. For example, had we done the play in German, but had not known the language, instead of composing flowing sentences such as 'Frau Königin, Ihr seid

¹⁴ Professor Anne Baker is currently Emeritus Professor for Sign Linguistics at the *University of Amsterdam*. She is also Professor Extraordinary at *Stellenbosch University* for Sign Linguistics

die Schönste hier, aber Schneewittchen ist tausendmal schöner als Ihr¹⁵’ (Grimms Märchen, 2019), we would instead produce the sentence ‘Königin schön, aber Schneewittchen tausend schön¹⁶’. The lack of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge forced us to produce sentences that lacked depth. Though they could be understood, it seemed clumsy, and a lot of important information was omitted. Although SASL was to be incorporated from the onset of the production, the show was by no means created to be exclusively for a deaf audience with SASL fluency. The physical aspect of the show was incorporated to make an ‘understandable’ show for hearing and deaf audiences alike.

Another concern, regarding limitations, was that of rehearsal attendance. Physical Theatre is a lengthy process and requires hands on involvement from performers. For the cast to gel well and ultimately become an ensemble, the group needed to spend time together. Because I was working with students, I suspected finding times that the entire cast would be available would prove difficult at times. The participants had many other priorities: classes, tests, choir practice, soccer practice, their own class rehearsals and so on. The more people in a cast, the more difficult it is to find times that suit everyone. As an initial strategy to combat this problem the cast was asked to send any dates they needed set aside for their personal affairs, and from there my Stage Manager and I would attempt to set-up a rehearsal schedule.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter One chapter covers the background and literature review of this thesis.

Chapter Two discusses several elements that were looked at during the process of developing the performance, such as: mime, puppetry and improvisation. There are

¹⁵ English translation: ‘Ms Queen, you are the most beautiful here, but Snow White is a thousand times more beautiful than you’.

¹⁶ English (direct) translation: ‘Queen beautiful, but Snow White thousand beautiful’.

explanations of exercises used during rehearsals. I also incorporate my field notes, as well as notes from my participant's journals.

Chapter Three looks at the performances and includes major variations and changes that were made during the run of the show.

Chapter Four includes a script for the play. The script of the play is a way of documenting the process, or the final product in the process. The chapter includes an alternative style script. The script focuses on the Sign Language used in the performance, rather than the specific movement sequences.

Chapter Five is a reflection on the practical component and attempt to bring the previous chapters together.

2. Chapter Two: Developing the Performance of *Mission: Heartstone*

2.1 *Background*

In the initial stages of my research, I contemplated various themes for the performance. I did not want to use a too serious and realistic theme (such as government politics or social debates) because I wanted to leave space for imagination and interpretation of the unknown and magical. The two themes which stood out most were that of a deep-sea adventure, and a deep-space adventure.

My family used to avidly support *Bayworld Oceanarium* in Port Elizabeth. From a very young age, my sister and I were lucky enough to have many opportunities to interact with the dolphins and seals at *Bayworld*. We quickly formed a bond with the staff and the animals, and were invited into a group with special privileges, called 'Friends of Bayworld'. This ignited and encouraged my fondness of (most) sea creatures. I also thoroughly enjoy watching *Discovery Channel* or *National Geographic* shows about exploring shipwrecks such

as the *Titanic* or their ‘Drain the Oceans’ series¹⁷. My sister is also a scuba-diver and often records her amazing underwater adventures. So initially, a deep-sea adventure looked like the preferred choice, however, as I thought more about the theme, I became concerned that it would be too similar to *Beloofde Land*¹⁸ – I felt I would be too influenced by the images I saw in the show, and instead of creating new images, I would use those that excited me in this already existing Physical Theatre influenced play. I laid the theme to rest and instead focused on my other one: space.

There was no clear and precise moment that caused me to contemplate and focus on space and the universe. My father is a pilot, starting his career in the South African Air Force (SAAF). He grew up in a small town and had a dream of being a pilot one day. Being in the Air Force, he was required to stay up to date with anything aviation related (as you would, in any case, expect someone with a keen interest in a topic to do). In 1981, the *Space Shuttle Columbia* (the first manned space shuttle into space) was launched¹⁹. My father was busy with his initial pilot training, but everyone stopped working and went as a group to watch the launch in the officer’s mess. The same happened when *Columbia* came back for landing²⁰. Together, they sat and watched in awe at this incredible feat of humans, to successfully send a vehicle into space, and fly it back to land back on earth like a regular aeroplane. As a young

¹⁷ ‘*Drain the Oceans* dives deep into the unknown; a truly epic, truly original series that takes underwater adventure and earth science illustration into a whole new era. Ambitious exploration, advances in scientific research, and innovative technology mean Earth Science and History step forward to expose hidden evidence of the most amazing undersea mysteries, as never seen before’ (National Geographic, 2019a: Drain The Oceans).

¹⁸ See the section on ‘Puppetry and Object Work’ for more information about the show.

¹⁹ CBS news coverage of the Columbia 1981 launch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJRMOWwZMzc> (VingateTelevision, 2011).

²⁰ Documentation of the Columbia 1981 landing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJ3pqvHjFP8> (Bob Parker, 2009).

child, listening to my father speaking excitedly about his experiences and love for aircraft, it was bound to influence me. Because he surrounds himself with aircraft and astronomy-related things, I too have developed a keen interest in aviation.

One of my favourite primary school subjects was science, especially the astronomy section. Our solar system, galaxy and universe always fascinated me. After grade seven, I never had astronomy at school again. During my high school years, if I wanted information on the topic, I had to do my own research. If I was interested in the topic, I had to find out about it myself. If I had not followed an arts and language direction, I would have most likely explored the avenue of astronomy. Louie Giglio's 'Indescribable' *Passion Talk Series* (released on DVD in 2012) uses captivating imagery of the universe. This was the first encounter I had with his material, and the incorporation of stars and planets created a very appealing comparison, or metaphor, for me. The use of these images, and the use of playing sounds captured from space from stars, absolutely fascinated me. *Pink Floyd* released their 'The Dark Side of the Moon' album in 1973. The album includes songs such as 'Breathe (in the Air)', 'The Great Gig in the Sky' and 'Eclipse'. The general aesthetics of the album's artwork and music style leans towards astronomy and space. As one of my favourite bands and albums I am constantly interacting with the space-like aesthetics of the album.

I may see something about space in the magazines (such as *Popular Mechanics*, *SA Flyer*, *National Geographic*) my father buys, or he might mention/discuss a breakthrough or a problem in the field with me. I have seen many *Discovery Channel* and *National Geographic* shows and series about the Space Race, Mars exploration, the mechanics of the solar system, alien theorizations and shows which theorize about the unknown in the universe. *National Geographic* even provides an entire section²¹ on their online site about

²¹ This section can be found at: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/space/> (National Geographic, 2019b: Space).

space exploration, which I at times browse. The night sky is beautiful to look at and I can spend hours staring at it. And oddly, before my active contemplation of a theme, my laptop's wallpaper was set to alternate between various NASA photos of galaxies and celestial bodies. I think my inspiration, and my pull to the theme of astronomy was a build-up of years of interstellar interests and influences that just seemed to finally find an outlet for expression. I often heard about things relating to space, in my home environment, but I was also constantly visually confronted with images of space (such as my laptop wallpaper).

Though I did not have the SASL vocabulary for the theme (or any SASL vocabulary at the start) I felt if I were able to gather relevant signs, the theme would allow for much interpretation from the performers, and that there were many avenues we could pursue. It could be highly technical and factual, or it could be a space story about aliens and space encounters. I have also never taken part in a play which explores deep-space and astronaut missions, so I was excited to take a chance on this theme. Because there is so much unknown about space, we could create fantastical imaginary worlds. We could gain inspiration from suns, constellations, satellites, planets, moons, dying stars, blackholes, dark matter/energy, meteors, aliens, space vehicles, past space missions, etcetera.

2.2 The Beginning of the Process

The process began with auditions, where I cast six performers: Jenna Breedt, Caleb Felix, Malaika Jones, Abigail Jonkers, Lindi Joubert and Lascelles Marais. Lindi is a third year Drama and Theatre Studies student, while the rest of the cast are second years. Caleb is the only male of the cast. All my participants gave me permission to refer to them by name while discussing the process of *Mission: Heartstone*. Their audition and callbacks allowed me a glimpse into their manner of moving, and an idea of their personalities as a group.

The first rehearsal session consisted of Abigail, Jenna and Malaika. I started the session with a discussion to find out what the performers knew and thought about space.

Their knowledge of astronomy was limited. Jenna's mother worked in an observatory when she was younger, Malaika was more interested in astrology and Abigail knew a bit about the conspiracy theory surrounding the first moon walk by a USA astronaut. For the next rehearsal, Lascelles and Lindi joined the group. We once again sat down and first spoke about their interest in space. Lascelles mentioned she was attracted to the visual aesthetics of planets, for example, all the blue ones, and a planet that rains diamonds. Finally, when Caleb joined the group, I prompted Caleb about his knowledge of space. His knowledge was limited to what he had seen in movies such as the 2014 science fiction *Interstellar*. Although their knowledge and interests were quite contrasting, they were able to speak freely, and they connected well with each other. Everyone listened respectfully to each other and offered input. I did this to get an idea of the group's reaction to space as a theme, and to measure to what extent the story could lean towards fact or fiction.

Malaika, Jenna and Abigail were immediately drawn to each other at the auditions and the beginning of the rehearsals: creating an image of the Three Amigos, the Three Musketeers. Using the idea of three companions and relating it back to space, they became the **Three Astronauts**. Malaika, Jenna and Abigail took on the roles of Commander Malaika, Command Pilot Jenna and Flight Engineer Abby, respectively.

Lindi, Lascelles and Caleb, became the basic-black/planet-performers/air-performers. Instead of portraying the same character throughout the play, these three performers assisted in creating a landscape and taking on the roles of the various extra-terrestrial critters on the planets. However, they also had special individual characters.

Lascelles's character was **Cleo** – a mystical being residing on Planet Heartstone. From the beginning of the rehearsals, Cleo took on the form of a character protecting something powerful (which later became the Heartstone). To build tension, it was important to have Cleo be in some form of confrontation with another character. Because Cleo was a

‘good’ character, her foe would have to be one that posed a danger to her and the astronauts. Caleb took on the role of an antagonist, **Supernova**. The Supernova would cause tension in Cleo and the astronauts’ life.

Lindi had a very dance-like way of moving. I wanted her to have a moment where she could make use of her dancing training and bring a new feeling to the show. She became a representation of the moon, becoming the **Moon**.

The astronauts had to face various hardships before they reached the Heartstone. Instead of always finding danger on a planet, I wanted something else in space to pose a threat. When one thinks of threatening objects or events in space, one thinks of a supernova, a meteor shower or, maybe most commonly, a blackhole. Because Lascelles and Caleb already had a scene forming (Cleo and the Supernova), and the astronauts could not alter their characters, Lindi and Caleb stepped in to assume the role of a **Blackhole**. Lascelles used this scene as a costume change moment.

The basic storyline, to see the following paragraphs in the chapter in context, is as follows:

1. The astronauts (Malaika, Jenna and Abigail) introduce themselves and their mission to the public (audience).
2. The astronauts and plane take-off with a carrier-plane (Lindi and Lascelles).
3. The Moon (Lindi) sees the astronauts pass by. She greets them.
4. The astronauts look at the stars (Lindi and Lascelles) and dance between them.
5. The astronauts land on Planet X. They look for the Heartstone. The planet is dangerous and has many earthquakes.
 - a. The astronauts make their way through the rough terrain and a tunnel (made from Lindi, Lascelles and Caleb). They quickly leave when the volcanoes erupt.

6. Command Pilot Jenna takes the other two astronauts (Malaika and Abigail) on a journey through the stars and space (Lindi, Lascelles and Caleb), flying her space shuttle (finger puppet).
7. The astronauts land on Planet Slinky. The astronauts look for the Heartstone. The planet is colourful and filled with life. The animals (Lindi, Lascelles and Caleb) play with the astronauts. The astronauts cannot find the Heartstone, so they leave.
8. A blackhole (Lindi and Caleb) forms and becomes stronger and stronger. All three astronauts are sucked into the blackhole. Only two (Malaika and Abigail) escape the blackhole.
9. Cleo (Lascelles) wakes up and begins her summer season sequence, on her Planet Heartstone.
10. The young Supernova (Caleb) attempts to overpower Cleo, however, Cleo is much stronger and wards Supernova off. She goes to sleep.
11. Cleo (Lascelles) wakes up and begins her winter season sequence. Ending the sequence, she goes to sleep.
12. Cleo (Lascelles) once again wakes up and begins her summer season sequence again. However, she is interrupted by the astronauts (Malaika and Abigail) who land on her planet. As the astronauts look for the Heartstone, they encounter Cleo, who helps them retrieve the Heartstone.
13. Supernova (Caleb) returns – bigger and stronger. The astronauts retreat. Cleo and Supernova have a final confrontation.
14. Returning home, the astronauts (Malaika and Abigail) admire the Heartstone. The two astronauts make their way home – flying through stars (Jenna).
15. The Moon (Lindi) plays a game. There is a dangerous meteor shower which hits the Moon's home.

16. The astronauts (Malaika and Abigail) fly past the Moon, telling her they successfully completed their mission.

17. The astronauts make their way back to Earth. They show they have retrieved the Heartstone to the public (audience). They salute.

Mission: Heartstone is so named because the astronauts' mission was to search for and retrieve a precious stone that could allegedly restore Earth to its former healthy and beautiful glory.

2.3 *Techniques Used for Performance Development*

2.3.1 *SASL Interpretation/Translation and the Limitations in the Creative Process*

My original aim was to have a SASL interpreter present at rehearsals one to three times a week, so that they could get a feel of the performers abilities, and be constantly involved in the creation process. However, this was difficult to achieve, because there are only a handful of SASL singers in the Stellenbosch area. As a student, my budget is limited. It is difficult to expect a signer from Cape Town to come through so often, especially without compensation for petrol, time and their expertise. The interpreters I approached felt their schedules were unfortunately already too full to accommodate me.

I approached a teacher from *Wittebome* and asked whether she would be able to record herself signing some vocabulary and sentences for me. The idea was that I would send her initial words to interpret (words that arise from the initial work and ideas we have), and as we create new material, ask her again to interpret the new work. Along with this, she could use her own vocabulary (which we have not seen before) and from that vocabulary we could create a scene/sequence. We would thus have two kinds of impulses: from work to signs, and from signs to work. Following are the initial words and sentences I wanted to somehow work with:

Space	Unexplored	exploration
Space exploration	Undiscovered	terrestrial planet
Out of orbit	“Let’s collect some	<u>rock</u>
<u>Astronaut(s)</u>	samples.”	metal
shuttle/craft/vehicle/ship	Alien	gas giants
<u>Rocket</u> engine	Monster/Creature	hydrogen
<u>Planet(s)</u>	“Let’s get out of here.”	helium
Mercury		Ice giants
Venus		comet(s)
Earth		asteroid belt
Mars		asteroid(s)
Jupiter		<u>meteoroid(s)</u>
Saturn		meteor(s)
Uranus		natural satellite
Neptune		axis
Pluto		rotate
<u>Stars</u>		volatiles – highly volatile
<u>Constellation(s)</u>		ammonia
		methane
		<u>5, 4, 3, 2, 1</u>
		<u>Oxygen/Air</u>
		<u>explosion</u>
		Radiate (energy)
		<u>Light</u>
		<u>Heat</u>

		Lightyears Travel Distance
<u>Black hole</u> Dark matter Dark energy “Mayday!” ‘Houston, we have a problem.’ “We need to carry on.”	“See how if you connect the stars, they create a picture.” Deep space Beyond the <u>Milky Way</u> Galaxy(ies) “Entering the unknown....” Lightyear(s)	Proton/solar sail “We’re almost <u>home</u> .” All systems go <u>Moon</u>
Starlight stardust <u>Supernova</u> / <u>dying</u> Evacuate	spirit / soul queen	

Acquiring the above list also proved difficult as there are few signs in SASL terminology that cover this subject. If a community, for any language, does not converse over a topic, there is no need to create vocabulary for it. To date, there has not been a need for extreme scientific vocabulary. I was given permission to have access to a short PDF booklet²² (*Western Cape Government, Deaf Schools Project*) of a few signs relating to space, which the learners at *Wittebome* used, from an educator at the institution.

Even with sites/Apps such as *Spread the Sign*, *eDEAF* and *FingerTalk*, the SASL vocabulary available to me was limited. Because of these limitations, I began to actively

²² The signs from the book are marked in green and the ones underlined were eventually incorporated into the play.

make use of BSL alongside the SASL. Professor Baker supplied me with the *University of Edinburgh's Scottish Sensory Centre's* website, where there is a list of terminology for various astronomy, biology, chemistry, geography, mathematics and physics principles/terms. For example, because I was working with astronomy, but do not have any SASL signs for the names of the planets in our solar system, I could use the BSL signs. I informed my cast whether a sign was SASL or BSL during the process. In the end, we did use the majority of SASL.

2.3.2 *Teaching of SASL and the Incorporation of Sign Language in the Performance*

My participants were all fluent in English and Afrikaans. During rehearsals we easily conversed in these two languages. Besides Lindi, none of my participants had much prior knowledge of SASL. Their first contact with the language would be through me.

At the very beginning of the process, I spent a few moments with the performers doing warming-up exercises their hands by standing stationary and just moving their hands. The focus we, as humans, generally give to our hands is minimal. We are constantly using our hands: to feel the fabric of a new item of clothing, to hold a pen, to eat food with, to shake a hand. Our hands are always involved. However, we pay little attention to the inner workings of our hands. We are hardly aware of the different bones, each little muscle that plays a role, and how the nerves allow for thousands of sensations and movements to occur. By having the performers stand still for a few moments and look at their hands, while gently twisting, bending and extending the various components of the hand, the performers became more aware of the many possibilities the hands could actually offer. Similar to an exercise I found of *Frantic Assembly*, when they explored BSL, my performers practiced and explored their signs throughout the process with their eyes open. They were able to focus on the signs and observe how the sign moved, whether it moved at all, and, if it did move, how it affected the consecutive movements (On Blindness Hands, 2019).

The first rehearsal where my entire cast was present, we focused on SASL. For the beginning of this session, I focused on SASL fingerspelling and introductions. We sat in a circle and slowly went through the fingerspelling alphabet. There was difficulty in clearly distinguishing A, E and S from each other. The A-hand was often a mix of E-hand bent fingers, and the extended thumb.

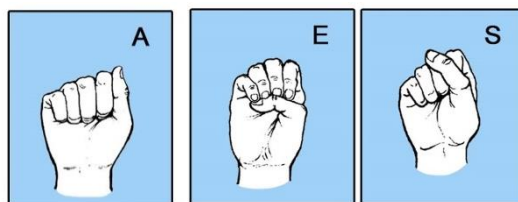


Figure 2. 1

Figure 2. 2

Figure 2. 3

Another struggle was K and P – to initially figure out the K-hand position, and then the recall that P was basically a K-hand, put facing down.

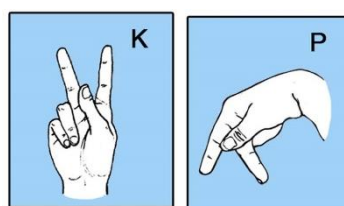


Figure 2. 4

Figure 2. 5

Abigail, Malaika and Caleb tended to overextend their R, by wrapping their middle finger low and far around the index finger.

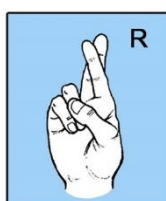


Figure 2. 6

After going through the alphabet about three times together, I let each performer go through it individually. I let the other performers comment on what they saw. This helped each one to differentiate between the signs, see how different individuals interpret and create

a sign, and help train their eyes to find mistakes and help them be more precise in their signing.

They learned how to ask someone's name, as well as how to reply to that: NAME POSS1 (fingerspell) and NAME POSS2 WHAT _le. To explain some of the terminology, or gloss terms, in Sign Language, which I will be making use of (Quer, Cecchetto, Donati, Geraci, Kelepir, Pfau & Steinback, 2017):

- INDEX:
 - INDEX1 = 'I/me'
 - INDEX2 = 'you'
 - INDEX3 = 'he/she/it/they'
- POSSESSION:
 - POSS1 = 'my/mine'
 - POSS2 = 'your/yours'
 - POSS3 = 'his/hers/its/theirs'
- Verb markings:
 - If a verb is marked with a number on either side of the word, it indicates the "signing space used in verbal agreement and pronominalization".
 - 1HELP2 would be 'I help you'.
 - 2VISIT1 would be 'You visit me'.
 - 2INVITE3 would be 'You visit him/her/them'.
- Non-manual:
 - _re indicates 'raised eyebrows' which is used to mark yes/no-questions (do, are, have, is, will) in SASL.
 - _le indicates 'lowered eyebrows' which is used to mark wh-questions (who, what, where, why, whose, when, how, how many) in SASL.

- _neg indicated a negation, where a side-to-side headshake occurs (cannot, do not, never, not, no, none).

I also explained to the group what a sign-name was, taught them how to sign their own sign-name, and how to ask for someone's sign-name: SIGN-NAME POSS1 (sign-name) and SIGN-NAME POSS2 WHAT _le. We decided as a group on the sign-name to be used by each member. The sign-names which we decided on were as follows:

- Abigail: A-hand and a repetitive turn in her dimple area ('A' for Abigail, and when she smiles, she had prominent dimples).
- Caleb: C-hand bent to make a square shape that sweeps from his inner eyebrow to outer eyebrow ('C' for Caleb and showing his full brows).
- Jamie: J-hand making a flick next to the side of the face, where one's glasses would sit ('J' for Jamie, and showing I wear glasses).
- Jenna: J-hand flick next to the face, and FLOWER++ ('J' for Jenna, and most of the cast associated Jenna with flowers).
- Lascelles: two L-hands on the side of the face, slanted away from the nose ('L' for Lascelles, and showing her high cheekbones).
- Lindi: PINK HAIR (because Lindi's physical trademark is her vibrant pink hair).
- Malaika: two M-hands that flick into a K-Pop (Korean Pop) heart ('M' for Malaika, and to show she is an avid K-Pop fan).

As the rehearsals progressed, the cast also assigned sign-names to some of the crew members.

They were as follows:

- Lulu Kieser (Production Manager/Stage Manager): SMILE - one L-hand, palm facing to the face, over the lips (an L-hand for her name, but also because of her sweet smile).

- Alexander Brits (Stage Designer): YELLOW BEARD (indicating to his yellowish beard).
- Nicolaas Joubert (Assistant Stage Manager/Sound Technician): BLACK CURLY-LONG-HAIR (highlighting his long curly hair).
- Marloise du Plessis (Technical Assistant): one flat-palm hand creating the wave pattern of her hair/fringe (because of her unique hairstyle).
- Emma Daly (Technical Assistant): two V-hands moving from the middle of her hair, down her hair to either side (to resemble her dual-colour dyed hair).

This was a fun exercise for the group, and not only did it lead to the performers becoming actively aware of each other (in finding a trait to connect with a sign-name), but it also offered a moment of bonding in the cast.

My Stage Manager, Lulu, printed a picture with the SASL alphabet and gave each cast member a copy. The picture she gave the cast however differed slightly. The G, P and X signs (in the picture below) differed to what I was teaching the cast. Although it is not extremely different, it could cause confusion among the cast who were completely new to learning SASL. I wanted everyone to use the same fingerspelling.

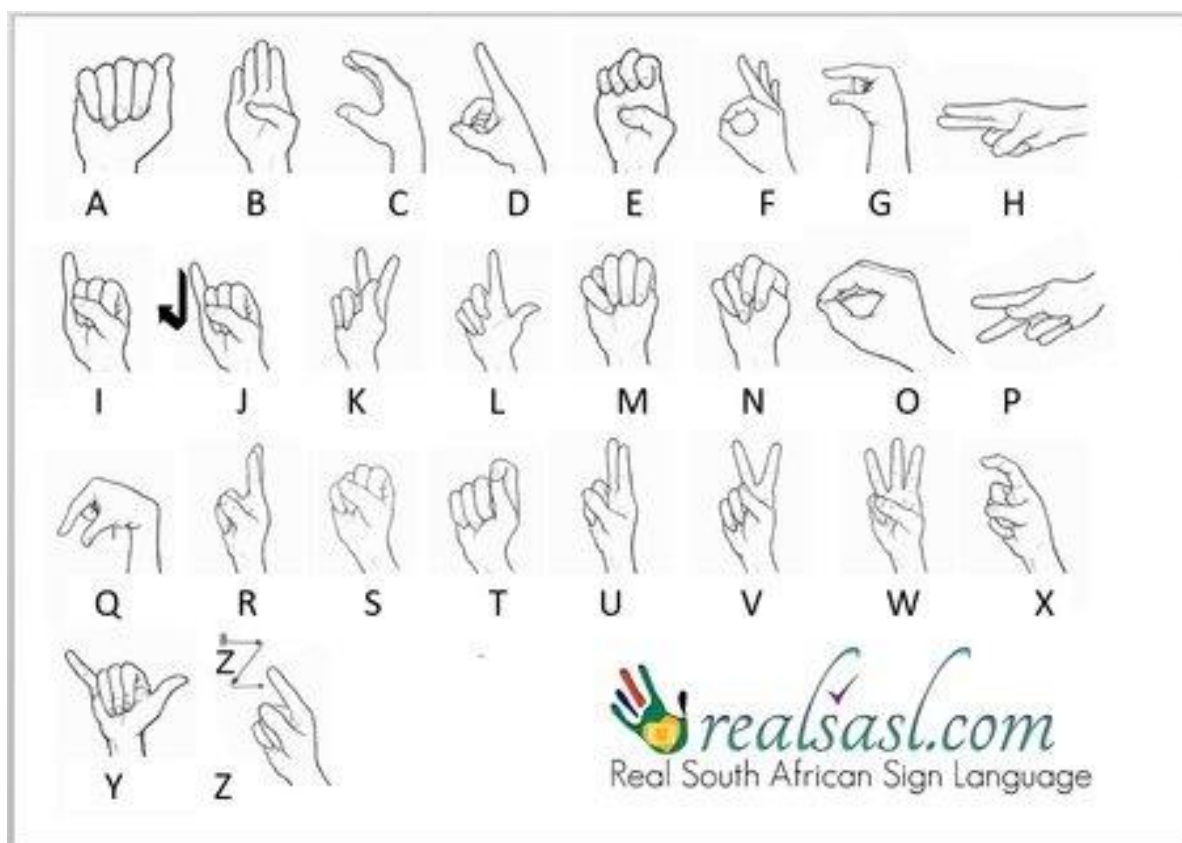
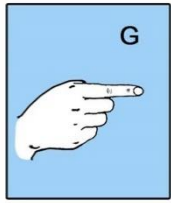

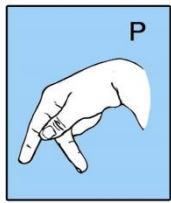
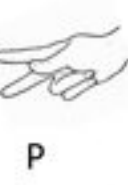


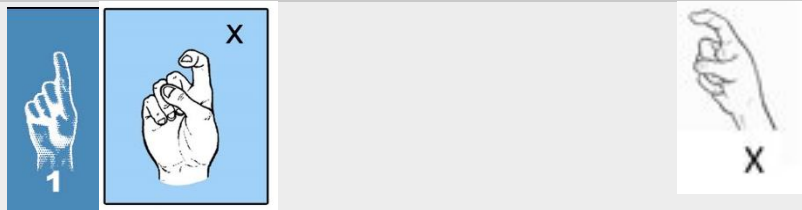
Figure 2. 7

The picture Lulu gave to the cast, so that they had a printed sheet to practice from at home (RealSASL, 2018).

Fingerspelling signs I chose ²³	Fingerspelling sign from their physical copy ²⁴
	
	

²³ From the *National Institute for the Deaf SASL* fingerspelling chart.

²⁴ From the *RealSASL.com* SASL fingerspelling chart.



Although the X handshapes are the same, I chose to use the X which I learnt in my SASL 178 class. It begins with an index finger select, extended, closed, palm facing outwards. Then, the selected index finger bends, as the hand rotates for the palm to show inwards.

Table 2. 1

All the vocabulary that the cast was learning was highly dependent on me and my knowledge, as I was their only connection to SASL. While teaching my cast Sign Language, I would either sign the signs myself or show them a video of someone signing. Often, I would show the sign, then show them the video, and we would practice the sign together. This allowed them the chance to see two people creating the sign. For most of the SASL, I was able to merely show them the sign myself (as I knew the signs and had practiced them before). Throughout the rehearsals we covered the following conversation topics: greetings, family/relationships, animals/pets, colours, counting/time, weather, food and clothing. Although about 80% of the vocabulary they learnt was not used, it offered them a chance to explore with the language and learn some of the grammatical properties of SASL. Abigail commented: “I enjoyed learning various ‘everyday’ signs. This made it fun for me personally, as we would have conversations. This was really exciting as I felt like I was learning a whole new language and a way of understanding”.

I was aware that much of the vocabulary I was teaching them would probably not be used in the performance, but, as with any language, I thought it important to allow the performers to learn about the language's vocabulary, grammatical aspects and some of the culture around the community who uses it to communicate with. Caleb stated in his journal: "We were taught to communicate in basic ways. This was very enriching, educating and eye opening." The performers learnt several Frozen/Established lexical items and how to interpret Productive lexicon items. 'Frozen' or 'Established' lexical items are signs with a fixed form and meaning assigned to it. These signs are generally standardised in the way they are signed: "An utterance in a signed language is highly likely to consist of lexical signs (modified or not), classifier signs (simultaneous or not), fingerspelled items, constructed action, and gestures" (Johnston et al., 2007). For example, the SASL sign for CAR, HORSE, FOUR, TWO-HUNDRED, A and L. 'Productive' lexical items are described as "selecting the component parts and putting them together in appropriate ways to create particular kinds of effects" (Brennan, 1990: p. 163). This means that there is no conventionalised or specific way of creating the sign – it is created in a way the signer thinks it will be understood. These signs cannot stand alone, like a Frozen lexical item can. Without the context, these signs would not be understood. For example, in SASL, singers may sign CAR the same, however, explaining how a car drove up a dangerously steep and winding road, will be produced very differently by different signers.

This mixture of Frozen and Productive lexicon makes for slightly easier production of a sentence, for someone who is beginning to learn Sign Language. As long as the learner can produce relatively understandable Frozen lexical items, they can use their discretion as how to approach the sentence.

This interpretation of Productive lexicon allows for a wide variety of sentence construction: some sentences may focus more on the terrain of the location, others on the

reaction of the one experiencing the event in the sentence, and some may even give focus to the action being performed in the sentence. For a performer, there are thus many options to choose from. The performer would have to experiment with which sentence they feel works the best in the sequence. In Physical Theatre, the variety of ‘correct’ ways to produce a sentence allows a performer to experiment with a multitude of impulses and ideas. They are able to start or end sequences differently, depending on what their sentence looks like. They are also faced with different movement impulses. For example, to my knowledge, there are more than five ways to sign FIREMAN in SASL. Some make use of the FIRE sign, while others use a flat palm on the forehead (to represent a fire brigade helmet), or others the action of a fire hose, in conjunction with one of four signs for MAN (for example one sign located on the chest, or a sign indicating a man’s moustache). Insert FIREMAN into a sentence like YESTERDAY PARIS FIRE-ENGINE TIRES-BIG BLACK FIREMAN QUICKLY RIDE (“Yesterday, in Paris, a fireman quickly rode a fire engine with big black tires”) and with the interpretation of FIREMAN, how to show big black tires, and how the speaker ‘quickly rode’, the sentence has many possibilities. All the locations, handshapes and movements associated with these signs give rise to different movement impulses.

Below are examples of vocabulary that the performers were taught. What they learnt in SASL is, but not limited to, the list below:

Topic	Signs
Greenings:	HELLO, HOW-ARE-YOU, FINE, GOOD, TIRED, HAPPY, SAD, SICK, FURIOUS, YES, NO, DON’T-KNOW, WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, WHOSE, WHICH, SAME, NAME, SURNAME, SIGN-NAME, what is your name/surname/sign-name (NAME/SURNAME/SIGN-NAME POSS2 WHAT), WEEKEND DO

	WHAT, SLEEP, WATCH, TV, GO, and how to reply to these basic questions.
Family:	MOTHER, FATHER, SISTER, BROTHER, DAUGHTER, SON, GRANDMOTHER, GRANDFATHER, AUNT, UNCLE, COUSIN, BOY, GIRL, BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND, WIFE, HUSBAND, do you have family? (FAMILY HAVE HOW-MANY), MARRIED, WEDDING, ENGAGED, when is your wedding? (WEDDING POSS2 WHEN), are you engaged or married? (INDEX2 ENGAGED OR MARRIED WHICH), along with replies to the questions.
Animals/Pets:	DOG, CAT, BIRD, CHICKEN, COW, HIPPO, LIZARD, TURTLE, FISH, SEAL, LADYBUG, WOLF/FOX, RHINO, SQUIRREL, DRAGONFLY, BUTTERFLY, SPIDER, SNAKE, how many pets do you have (PETS HAVE HOW-MANY?), what/which is your favourite animal (ANIMAL FAVOURITE WHAT/WHICH), what/which animal do you dislike (ANIMAL DISLIKE WHAT/WHICH) and how to reply to similar questions.
Colours:	COLOURS, DARK, LIGHT, RED, YELLOW, ORANGE, GREEN, BLUE, PURPLE, SILVER, GOLD, BROWN, GREY, BLACK, WHITE, what is your favourite colour (COLOUR FAVOURITE WHAT), what colour do you dislike (COLOUR DISLIKE WHAT), and how to reply to those questions.
Counting/time:	1 – 100, 1000, 1-MILLION, 1-BILLION, 1-TRILLION, 1 – 12 o'clock, HALF-PAST, QUARTER-TO, QUATER-PAST, SECONDS, MINUTES, HOURS, what time is it (TIME WHAT).

Weather:	WEATHER, SEASONS, SUMMER, AUTUMN, WINTER, SPRING, COLD, COOL, HOT, WARM, RAIN, HAIL, SNOW, RIVER, MOUNTAIN, SUN, WINDY, VOLCANO, DRY and SOIL.
Food:	EAT, BANANA, WATERMELON, ORANGE, APPLE, GRAPES, KIWI, BLACK-BERRY, BLUE-BERRY, PINEAPPLE, TOMATO, LETTUCE, CORN, BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER, EGGPLANT, PUMPKIN, SPINACH, CARROT, POTATO, CHICKEN, BEEF, ONION, CHEESE, PIZZA, BOEREWORSE, BRAAI, TOASTED-SANDWICH, TEA, COFFEE, COOLDRINK
Clothing:	BUTTONS, ZIP, T-SHIRT, PANTS, SKIRT, DRESS, SOCKS, SHOES, BOOTS, JERSEY, HOODIE, and how to describe them in lengths, colours and fabric.

Table 2. 2

With the learning of family vocabulary, we experimented with the use of buoys. Liddell (2003: p. 223) states: “Signers frequently produce signs with the weak hand that are held in a stationary configuration as the strong hand continues producing signs. Semantically they help guide the discourse by serving as conceptual landmarks as the discourse continues. Since they maintain a physical presence that helps guide the discourse as it proceeds, I am calling them buoys. Some buoys appear only briefly whereas others may be maintained during a significant stretch of signing”. This made the performers aware of being able to refer back to something, or someone, on their weak hand. It challenged them to: 1. hold a buoy and continue signing with their dominant hand, and 2. to switch between just holding a buoy, to holding a buoy but signing on with the dominant hand, and then moving to dropping the buoy to sign with both hands, and then bringing the buoy back as referencing for another sentence.

For example, when answering the question “How many family members do you have?” where four fingers would be used as a list buoy.

Two kinds of non-manual features in Sign Languages are mouthings and mouth gestures. Mouthings are “full or partial articulation[s] during a sign’s production of the corresponding spoken word (usually voiceless). [...] mouth actions are derived from spoken language” (Lewin & Schembri, 2011: p. 95). For example, if I sign APPLE, I may create a mouthing of the ‘a’ in the word. Using a mouthing is not wrong or bad. But seeing as Sign Language is language for the deaf, who do not rely on sound for communication, it is preferred to not overly use a mouthing. Mouthings are helpful when communicating to hearing people. I never mentioned to the group whether they should say the spoken English/Afrikaans word for the signs they were using, or mouth the word, or be completely silent (vocal and mouthing). I wanted to observe how the cast used mouthings and mouth gestures. I found that the performer to use the most mouthings was Malaika. She would mouth each word – though not audibly. Secondly, Jenna and Abigail would use a few mouthings, but not always. Caleb, Lascelles and Lindi never used mouthings. It did not bother me, that the performers used (or did not use) mouthings so differently. It exhibited different ways of combining non-manual features (influenced by personal preference) into Sign Language.

On the other hand, mouth gestures are:

“actions of the mouth that are deemed part of the signed language and are not derived from ambient spoken language. It is possible that some may be related to gestures used by hearing people within a particular culture, such as the puffing out of one’s cheeks to indicate large size by non-signers and signers” (Lewin & Schembri, 2011: p. 95).

For example, when one signs SMALL, the sign will be produced and simultaneously the cheeks will be sucked in. Or should one want to indicate a small hamburger, not only will

HAMBURGER be produced smaller in shape, but the cheeks too will be sucked in. I explained to the cast how facial expressions, incorporating mouth gestures, can be useful in Sign Language. However, I did not focus on a multitude of meanings for mouth gestures. I mentioned to the group how sucked in or puffed out cheeks can indicate size (small or large) or distance (short or long). Also, when signing LIKE, how a smile should accompany the sign to reinforce its meaning. Or a frown or look of discontent should accompany the sign DISLIKE. All of this emphasised or articulated a sign's meaning.

Combining mouth gestures with the signing was somewhat difficult for most of the cast. Specifically, on Planet X, when Lindi, Lascelles and Caleb signed their first sequence. There was a disconnect in facial expression to the words they were signing – the lack of mouth gestures made the sign's meanings quite unclear. It was from the combination of expression and mouth gestures that was to bring across the meaning of the signs (as many were arbitrary or non-transparent signs). It took many rehearsals and reminding the performers to use the sign and mouth gesture, visually showing them myself creating the image, and encouraging them to bring in an element of mime/melodramatic-ness to the scene, to get them to use elements such as this. In the end, it was the astronauts who used the most mouthings and mouth gestures. This set the astronauts apart from the planet-performers and other characters. It linked the astronauts as a group, which in itself is appropriate because the audience would associate the mouthings with the astronauts.

For most of the topics, we sat in a group and I would sign the word while saying it (greetings, family and weather were of this group). For the food and animal/pet topics, I would show the sign and ask the cast to guess their meaning. Because these two groups had high iconicity, I thought it would be an interesting way of learning the signs: the performers were forced to think visually and piece together what the handshapes could be indicating. One of the last topics the cast learnt together was that of clothing. When I introduced the

topic to the cast, I did not explicitly tell them what they were going to learn. I did not speak. I signed to them CLOTHES WHAT _le and tried to prompt them along. For example, I would point to Lindi and ask CLOTHES WHAT _le. I would then point to or tug on my own t-shirt, then point back to Lindi. I would sign its colour, BLACK, and sign that it was a LONG SLEEVE top. If they did not understand, I pointed to myself and explained my similar clothing item, and then described the performers similar clothing item. When the cast realised what I was referring to, we went around the group and described the performers clothes, referencing colour and style. They were able to experiment with Productive vocabulary (how to show long pants, or short sleeves, or a beanie with patterns/decorations), while using their Frozen lexicon that they had been learning.

The performers exhibited various levels of interest and initial capability for signing. From the beginning, Abigail, Jenna and Malaika seemed to feel more comfortable with signing. They were able to reproduce and recall signs easier and faster than Lindi, Lascelles and Caleb. At times I gave the performers a few minutes at the beginning of the rehearsal to make conversation with their fellow performers. Abigail, Jenna and Malaika tried creating their own sentences – not always grammatically correct, however they attempted to play with the language. Lascelles and Caleb often copied what I had signed, or what someone else signed. Lindi was a mixture of the two groups. Their differences and interests however are completely understandable – it would be the same with French, German or any other language. Some people just gravitate to certain languages easier. From the physical work, Abigail, Jenna and Malaika gravitated towards working with each other, and seeing how well they picked up the SASL, confirmed to me that they should be grouped together.

Regarding the Sign Language, Malaika comments in her journal that it was interesting and exciting to “start thinking [of] utilising this new knowledge in sequences.” I found the astronauts improvised more easily where to use signs, but, this being said, it was

also then their only means of communication with each other in the performance, seeing as they did not speak.

If Caleb used a sign, it was generally me forcing/prompting it into his routine. Lindi, and Lascelles, and I, often took a moment to consciously decide which sign they would use. As I expected, the performers were able to comprehend and produce transparent iconic and non-transparent iconic signs easier than arbitrary signs. Tolar, Lederberg & Gokhale (2008: p. 225), iconic signs are easier to interpret as they represent a visual representation of the subject/object they are referring to:

“Iconic symbols are a common means of communication. They are prevalent because individuals can interpret them without requiring a prior explicit connection between them and their referents. The features or actions portrayed by iconic symbols can generate mental representations and associations that often match or come very close to the idea the presenter of the icon is intending to convey. The classic example of this aspect of iconicity is the game charades. This is not true of arbitrary symbols, for which meanings have to be explicitly made either by association or definition. For this reason, iconic representations are considered relatively easy to recognize and learn as symbols.”

Signs (in SASL) such as ANIMAL, STONE, DIAMOND, STAR, MOON, FLY/AIRPLANE, JUMP, CONFUSING, RED and HOT were regularly produced by the performers. Because they were of the signs that were easier remember, when the performers had to insert their own ‘dialogue’ these were the kinds of signs they first opted for. Abigail said: “I enjoyed learning various ‘everyday’ signs. This made it fun for me personally, as we would have conversations”.

From here on, all examples of signs will be SASL, unless a sign is marked with a *, in which case it will be a BSL sign. For example:

- CAT CHAIR SIT → SASL, SASL, SASL
- CAT CHAIR* SIT → SASL, BSL SASL

- CAT* CHAIR* SIT* → BSL, BSL, BSL

2.3.2.1 The Birth of Cleo and Her Season Signs

“The initial inspiration for Cleo came from the planet Uranus. I like how the planet looked, the intense blue and white, and what fascinated me about the planet was that it rains diamonds. That was also the initial inspiration for the stones and the diamonds and the sparkly aspect of the planet I was creating. Initially her colo[u]rs were blue, purple and pink. I wanted her to be a celestial being, made from the collision of two growing stars, and she was made in the midst of them.” (Extract from Lascelles Marais’s journal)

Lascelles had the ability to have a character of her own that would allow for a solo scene. To find a starting point to base a potential character on, Lascelles and I sat down and spoke about the planets in the Milky Way solar system. Of all of them, she related to Uranus and Pluto²⁵ the most: being drawn to a planet with raining diamonds, and a small far away planet. As we discussed the planet – and what planet might be like if it were a person – Lascelles used assertive language and painted a picture of a strong-willed character. She associated this with Uranus. These words, then influenced her initial movement explorations.

²⁵ According to NASA: “There are more planets than stars in our galaxy. The current count orbiting our star: eight. The inner, rocky planets are Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars. The outer planets are gas giants Jupiter and Saturn and ice giants Uranus and Neptune. Beyond Neptune, a newer class of smaller worlds called dwarf planets reign, including perennial favo[u]rite Pluto” (NASA, 2019: Solar System – Planets). Lascelles and I grew up learning that Pluto was an integral planet in our solar system. From the beginning we spoke about Pluto as part of the solar system (insisting our solar system had nine planets), though no longer classified as such. Our feeling towards the planet can be expressed by the following: “When Pluto was reclassified in 2006 from a planet to a dwarf planet, there was widespread outrage on behalf of the demoted planet. As the textbooks were updated, the internet spawned memes with Pluto going through a range of emotions, from anger to loneliness. But since the release of *New Horizons* images showing a very prominent heart-shaped feature on the surface, the sad Pluto meme has given way to a very content, loving Pluto that would like to once again be visited by a spacecraft” (NASA, 2019).

When we began in practice, I asked Lascelles to improvise movements she thought the character (or rather planet) may make. After giving her some time by herself, she showed me two sequences (with tested and improvised movements) she had in mind. I thought she would only show me one. What struck me as odd was that the one sequence's moves did not correlate to her words she had used earlier: her movements were timid and childlike. Although not uninteresting moves, the idea of a strong-willed character had grown on me, so the shy-ness of her second moves caught me off guard. When I asked her about it, she said she was thinking much more about Pluto than Uranus during the rehearsal. I could see she was unsure of which planet she was feeling more drawn to. We sat down, and I asked her to give six words to me, which she associated with the planets: six features she saw/thought of when she thought of each planet. Her list consisted of:

Uranus	Pluto
Intentional	Lonely
Superior	Kind
Magical	Friendly
Sparkly	Cold
Powerful	Innocent
Cunning/Clever	Child-like

Table 2. 3

After the lists were made, I asked her to spend some time exploring each word on their own. This would hopefully help her mind and body focus on one characteristic at a time, instead of trying to explore every possibility at one time. After she had gone through each individual feature of Uranus, she could explore them as a unit. After that, she would do the same with her Pluto list. By doing this exercise, I hoped she would be able to find the kind of movements she enjoyed exploring with, as well as movement-features which she could relate

to each other. I asked her to no longer think of the character as Pluto or Uranus, but rather as a new planet: far into deep space and on its own. When asked to give it a name Lascelles immediately responded with ‘Cleo’. Eventually, the words that we were able to associate with her new planet the most, were under Uranus. However, there was a hint of kindness and friendliness to Cleo, as well as something lonely. The narrowing down of characteristics helped her to focus her development and exploration.

“She is a legendary being that possesses qualities/powers that allows life and growth on her planet, and she possesses this power through her cent[re]. It was an exploration with small plastic diamonds that began this creation of the heart stone. I was exploring with a pink crystal shaped stone, when the process brought me to the entity that created power from my core. It was my Heartstone, where I possessed the power to give life on my planet.” (Extract from Lascelles Marais’s journal)

As the character of Cleo was taking shape, a strong image of giving life and nurturing became prominent. Because Lascelles often mentioned diamonds, we tried using plastic diamonds to portray magical rocks. I gave Lascelles a number of blue, purple and white plastic diamonds, and gave her time to explore how she might use them. Lascelles said that she often found exploration with props difficult as she did not know what to do with them. She saw it as just an ‘object’ and could not imagine it being used for anything more than it was made for. This was worrisome to me for several reasons.

As a theatre maker, we must often use ambiguous props and find ways to make an ‘uninteresting’ or plain prop interesting. In a general sense, it worried me that a prop/object did not evoke any kind of emotion or reaction from her. Another worry was about the general prop work that may occur in the piece. I realised that it would be unfair to assume that no props at all, would motivate and inspire her. I did however worry as to how seriously she would take future props. I had to keep in mind to not overuse props (especially with her) and that I would have to change my ways of eliciting certain things from her. Up until the last

week before the show, Lascelles did not have the Heartstone, nor a substitute, to rehearse with. I hoped that the lack of constant practice with the prop would allow her some space for experimenting during the last week and keep her interested in the actual prop (as she had not seen or handled it before). Although I am focusing on Lascelles as my main concern, she is not the first student to have mentioned to me that they do not enjoy working with objects. There could be many reasons for this, however, from the very few people I have spoken to, it seems they have become disenchanted as a result of how some classes approach the use of objects. Not many students relate to the methods used or understand the necessity of the exploration of the objects. Thus, I want to mention that Lascelles may not actually be uninspired by objects and not know how to work with them, but that she be in a state of mind which is inhibiting her abilities.

“Although her colours were initially blue and purple, it changed to green as the colour for growth and new life. Her planet then became a green planet. Instead of a planet filled with diamonds and stones, it was a planet filled with vines and flowers of different colours, and the heartstone was her source of energy that gave life to these stones.”
(Extract from Lascelles Marais’s journal)

The original colour palate for Cleo was based on the colours of diamond (white, and silvery) and Lascelles’ plastic diamonds (light transparent blues and purples). This combination made the character seems magical, yet cold. To solve a costume concern, it was decided that Lascelles’ character colour pallet should be changed to greens and golds²⁶. This change in colour also changed Lascelles interaction with her character. The image of green elicited more fluid movements and gave a softness to the movements. The colour also influenced the elimination or addition of features to the character.

²⁶ To read more about the colour change, read the section ‘Cleo’ in the ‘Costumes’ section.

“That is also where the summer and winter sequence came to life. When Jamie gave me various signs from summer and winter and the different seasons, I explored how this character could incorporate such signs into her movement, and what qualities would the movements be according to the different seasons. The signs influenced the movements I was creating. The winter signs influenced much slower and more isolated movements, whereas the summer movements developed into a more flowing and sporadic sequence. For me, this was to create that sense of summer and winter through my body language so that it would translate accurately to the audience.” (Extract from Lascelles Marais’s journal)

During the development of Cleo, one of the topics I was dealing with in my Sign Language 178 class, was weather. This prompted me to use weather signs with at least one of my character. Because Lascelles character was taking on the form of ‘Mother Nature’ (or beginning to relate to character Te Fiti²⁷, as Lascelles stated on multiple occasions) it seemed absolutely natural to teach Lascelles the weather vocabulary. To start adding SASL vocabulary, I first asked Lascelles if her planet had seasons, or if the weather was constant throughout the year, what her routine was like. This was to help me narrow the vocabulary. For example, if there were no volcanoes on the planet, showing Lascelles a sign for VOLCANO would be meaningless. Lascelles had a very clear picture of her character and the planet she imagined. She immediately described how the planet had two seasons (summer and winter) and how her character would wake up, listen to the chatter in space (sounds from the different stars) and how she would take care of the vegetation. Each day started and ended the same – waking up from the same spot and going to sleep there again. To indicate this, Lascelles would use CLEAR (<https://youtu.be/f08j75VoWxQ>) to wake-up at the beginning of a day and then use DARK (<https://youtu.be/VhKFe8eHthg>) as her final sign in a sequence to indicate it is the end of the day and time for her to sleep. She envisioned flowers of various

²⁷ Te Fiti is a Polynesian goddess of earth and life in Disney’s *Moana*.

shades of colours on her planet – she used two signs for FLOWER. We discussed vocabulary that would fit with flowers, such as TREE, VINES and LEAF.

With the new colour scheme, experimenting with the Laban Technique exercises, and the addition of signs, Cleo began taking on movements consisting of wringing and wrapping actions. Her arms and legs became like veins – twirling and constantly growing. This reinforced the sense of nature.

I asked Lascelles to create two sequences: one for her winter, and one for her summer season. I suggested, to use some similar movements (that could be used in both sequences) but to see how the movements would be affected by the weather. At the beginning of her summer sequence one of her first signs would be SUMMER (<https://youtu.be/dPFLbS5F8uQ>) to set the tone of summer. At the beginning of her winter sequence one of her first signs would be WINTER (https://youtu.be/UApS_EgSto) to set the tone of winter. The moves in the summer sequence were lighter – the movements were extended (her extremities extending away from the body), she made extensive use of spinning, and the majority of her moves were standing moves. These moves represented the life and energy that summer gives to nature. The winter sequence differed in that the movements were not only slower, and most of the movements happened close to Lascelles's core. Many of her moves were also low to the ground. The slowness, or heaviness, of her movements in the winter sequence were to show the affect that the cold had on Cleo as a planet, and character. Signs like FROZEN (<https://youtu.be/dZGOzGerhFU>) and ICE (<https://youtu.be/eqHvyk0l6KQ>) were incorporated to the sequence. These signs fall on the non-transparent to arbitrary scale. Although these signs would not easily be understood by non-signers, it would allow signing audiences to have a better understanding of the environment. A change of lighting (blues, whites and cold hues), signs and way of moving would indicate a different time and season. A phenomenon specific to winter, was when

Lascelles signed RAIN (<https://youtu.be/arQEgEy93hM>) and SNOW (<https://youtu.be/D7BSelE-8qY>), she altered her signing angle – instead of signing like one would face-to-face in a normal conversation, she positioned her signing in a vertical upwards angle (as she was lying on her back when signing these). She did this on her own accord. To me this was interesting, because everywhere else in the play (besides Caleb and Lindi's DANGEROUS) were signed at a normal conversation angle.

One difference Lascelles's solo pieces had, regarding signing, was that Lascelles had to incorporate the signing into her movement. There was to be one continuous motion from 'movement' to 'signing'. For someone unfamiliar with SASL, it should have looked like a hand movement or a gesture of sorts. The aim of this was to allow an elegance in Cleo's manner of speaking/moving. Unlike the astronauts who openly and blatantly change between movement and signing, Cleo incorporated it into her being. At the beginning of rehearsing this, Lascelles' signing came across prominent and it was 'obvious' that she was using Sign Language. Lascelles had to find ways to connect her signs with movements. One way of doing this, was to extend her beginning and ending of signs (or transitions between signs). This concealed the intention of 'now I am signing'.

2.3.2.2 The Forming of the Astronauts and the HEARTSTONE

Abigail, Malaika and Jenna were expected to individually do research on astronauts, aeronautical training and past/future space missions. Together, we briefly discussed their findings, and what they found interesting. From there, they experimented with possible personalities they thought could work for astronauts, and as characters.

One of the first scenes they played with was the introduction scene. At first, Jenna and Malaika were hearing astronauts, while Abigail took on the role of a deaf astronaut. Malaika entered the space and introduced herself with speech, followed by Jenna introducing herself

with speech as well, however when Abigail introduced herself, she used SASL and Jenna interpreted it. Malaika described the initial introduction sequence in her journal as follows:

“The introduction of us as astronauts includes me as captain, Abby being an eager deaf person, and Jenna an experienced but clumsy astronaut. We simply walk in one by one, accept the mission, sign our names, pickup our helmets, take our place on the opposite side, introduce our mission, salute the captain, put on the helmets and board the ship.”

Later in the process we agreed that Abigail’s being ‘deaf’ would be unsuccessful, as none of them knew SASL or the Deaf community well enough to believably portray a deaf person. All the astronauts changed to hearing people. However, they used Sign Language signs and gestures, as a form of communication in space. Malaika, the more stern and rigid of the astronauts, often signed WORK (<https://youtu.be/3meJU6fIMZM>) NOW to the other astronauts. It became her catchphrase throughout the play.

The astronauts explored their characters by playing an adaptation of Hot-Seating:

“A group, working as themselves or in a role, have the opportunity to question or interview role-player(s) who remain ‘in character’. There characters may be ‘released’ from frozen improvisation or the role may be prepared and the role-player(s) formally seated facing questioners” (Neelands & Goode, 2015: p. 43).

This activity “highlights character’s motivations and personality disposition; encouraging insight into relationships between attitudes and events, and how events affect attitudes; encouraging reflective awareness of human behaviour”.

The astronauts Hot Seat-ed with each other three times: the first meeting with each other in a cafeteria then meeting in a conference room just before a briefing of their mission and lastly, on the beach of a holiday resort. At first, they all sat at the cafeteria table.

Everyone felt a bit awkward. Instead, we reset the situation and had each performer walk in – giving them a moment to first explore with a movement. Having this moment to walk in their character’s shoes, breathing as their character, helped settle the astronaut characters. Malaika

immediately took on the authoritative role, becoming the ‘captain’. Between Jenna and Abigail, Jenna became a second in command, and Abigail became the rookie of the group. They decided on this power dynamic on their own.

Some questions that were asked and answered were: each other’s names and ranks, how many missions they had done, what they will be in charge of ‘this’ mission, what planet would they like to see, to less intimidating topics such as food choice or clothing choice. The conversations became of paramount importance to the astronauts’ backstories and to figure out just how they tie into each other’s lives. It was not important to establish specific ages or extreme detail about each character – they just needed a reference to draw from. For example, Jenna improvised that her character had her pilot’s licence for six years and had already flown two missions with Malaika’s character. Malaika’s character eventually became a veteran in space travel, having worked in the industry for twenty years. Abigail was a ‘newbie’ – straight out of training school - about to take on her first space mission – making her the youngest in the group. Among the three, Abigail tended to initiate the conversation. Malaika gave short and abrupt answers, leaving Abigail cut off. Jenna attempted to juggle both characters and involve them in the same conversation – she acted as a sort of peacemaker. Malaika’s astronaut was firm and cranky, and one difficulty she faced from the beginning was to not smile. We noticed Malaika, normally, has a resting lip that is slightly curled up, and this makes it look as if she is smiling or smirking. One of her challenges was to become aware of what her lip muscles specifically were doing and find a way to counter the appearance of a smile. Jenna and Abigail’s astronauts had a couple of similar traits: friendly, helpful, and being overly eager. However, because they found similar traits, their characters looked and acted very similarly. They had to find a solution to bring contrast to the characters. Jenna exaggerated her character’s awkwardness and clumsiness: although her

character was experienced and knew what she was doing, she became more accident prone (more likely to trip, or hit her head on a doorframe, etcetera).

Malaika, Jenna and Abigail were the performers to receive the most SASL training from me, as well as the performers to use SASL more consistently throughout the play. There were times when all of the performers would be in the rehearsals space, however, there would be different groups working on different scenes: for example, while Lindi and Caleb worked out their blackhole scene, Lascelles would be exploring Cleo, and the astronauts would be experimenting with different ways to land on or take off from a planet. Often, Malaika, Jenna or Abigail would grab my attention and ask, “What is the sign for ____?” If I knew the sign, or a similar one, they would incorporate it.

One of the most demanding scenes of SASL, was: Departure Star Dance. For the Departure Star Dance, the astronauts were to admire space and interact with the star poles. To introduce the piece, we wanted to say that the astronauts are past the Milky Way and into the bigger universe. Somehow we wanted to add AFTER (<https://youtu.be/T5KtcVWkWzM>) BEFORE (<https://youtu.be/5FRsJfYAWYE>). Eventually, after considering what kinds of sentences we could produce with our limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, Malaika had to sign: INDEX1 INDEX2++, MILKYWAY AFTER. GALAXY* HERE++ (Malaika aimed HERE++ all around her, indicating the vast space around the astronauts). Because I could not find the SASL sign for GALAXY, we opted for the BSL sign for GALAXY* (<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/BSL/astronomy/galaxy.html>). This sign, if one knows what it refers to, looks like the Sombrero Galaxy (M104) – a disk of stars. This seemed appropriate as the sign we had for MILKY WAY consisted GALAXY* and then appoint with the index finger to the palm (facing upwards) of a flat hand. Malika essentially signed “We are past the Milky Way. There are galaxies here, here, here, here....” All the astronauts then admire the stars, and signed STAR. Jenna then drew the other astronaut’s

attention by signing STAR++ CONSTELLAION* LOOK STAR++. STAR and CONSTELLATION are very similar as CONSTELLATION* is: STAR++ and then a slightly bent hand indicating a spot. By using STAR and CONSTELLATION* (<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/BSL/astronomy/starconstellation.html>) there would be a flow in the signing. Jenna, in essence, said “Look at the constellation. Look at the other constellation”, to the other astronauts.

The astronauts sometimes struggled with signing with both hands when they had props or costume pieces in their hands (as is natural if one is not a fluent signer, used to signing with one hand). Towards the end of the play, the remaining two astronauts make their way back to Earth. Before they go, HEARTSTONE HAVE, HOME (<https://youtu.be/uIzMa8ZOi-4>) GO is signed by Malaika. Malaika had to find a way to free both of her hands to sign. To do this, she would first look at the Heartstone (holding it directly towards the audience), then carefully place it into her costume sleeve. In the last scene, Malaika once again repeats her looking at the Heartstone, and placing it up her sleeve. Abigail, however, in the last scene keeps Jenna’s helmet in her arm. To combat the difficulty of two-handed signing, Abigail was given a sign which was made with a single hand: SUCCESS.

It was the astronauts and my duty to find a sign to use for the Heartstone. This proved to be more difficult than expected. We considered signs from DIAMOND, ROCK, LIFE, HEART*²⁸, HEARTBEAT* and SPARKLE. We also considered creating a heart by placing the thumbs together, the fingers together, and bending the fingers towards the thumb while the thumbs slightly extend to create a triangle point. We knew the Heartstone was a precious stone with mystical powers, and the key object – the objective of the mission – and thus had

²⁸ At the time, I did not know the SASL vocabulary for these BSL signs. I could only guess, hence I referred instead to the BSL vocabulary I could find.

to be clearly conveyed to the audience. We tried compounds such as: LIFE-ROCK, SPARKLE-DIAMOND, the heart gesture & DIAMOND. In the end, we decided on HEART*-DIAMOND²⁹. By doing this, HEART indicated the literal location of the heart, and DIAMOND indicated a sparklines and preciousness and it is created by the ring finger which allows for some iconicity to occur (rock + ring-finger = engagement ring = diamond). This sign would be easy for anyone to reproduce in the production, but it would also be noticeable by the audience.

2.3.2.3 The Interaction Between Cleo & the Astronauts (Planet Heartstone)

The development of this scene consisted of Lascelles (as Cleo) and Malaika and Abigail (as astronauts). Before this scene, Lascelles first developed a relatively solid summer and winter sequence. Abigail and Malaika, had been developing their astronaut characters with Jenna. This scene saw the separation of Jenna from the Malaika and Abigail. This led to being able to see a more defined contrast between Malaika and Abigail's character.

The first official introduction, between the astronauts and Cleo, occurred in a small speech room in the Drama Department. I asked Lascelles to perform her then current sequence of summer, then winter, and summer again. I told the astronauts to observe what Lascelles was doing, and to see what they could learn from her character from her movements and signs. Then, while Lascelles was going through her second summer sequence, I would wave the astronauts in. When the astronauts were waved in, I left them for a good fifteen minutes to just explore. I wanted to see how they interpreted Lascelles movements and signs, and how they might incorporate it in their movement. I was going to wave in Lascelles, indicating

²⁹ Please note, when I refer to the Heartstone in gloss form, I shall not make use of the HEART*-DIAMOND compound. I shall merely refer to it as HEARTSTONE.

when she should start interacting directly with the astronauts. Malaika wrote about this rehearsal:

“[...] we got to know our astronaut characters better. First working with [Lascelles] (although she mistakenly came at the wrong time), I think worked out for the best. Getting to know her character through mysterious circumstances was cool to explore. The way we tried to have our characters discover Lascelles’s planet as well as her character. I think it was a good thing that her actions and her character were not explained. This added an extra element of mystery for us to discover.”

By the end of the two-hour rehearsal, the three performers had a much clearer idea of how they wanted to interact with each other. They had, for the most part, omitted all speech. They used some signs, and many gestures to attempt to communicate with each other. Malaika noted:

“In the last part of the rehearsal, I think it was more needed to start verbally interacting between our characters in order to define and discover more about our own characters. It was nice to play around with [improvisation] with characterisation.”

For the next two weeks, there was a lot of focus given to the Planet Heartstone scene. It was a pivotal moment in the play the handover of a very precious, life-giving gem. In this scene, there are many components happening at the same time. Below, are a few examples of these:

1. The landing of the astronauts on a new planet, after losing their colleague and friend | Cleo becoming aware of strangers on her planet
2. The astronauts exploring a luscious green planet | Lascelles feeding her curiosity, by investigating the spaceship and hiding (HIDE <https://youtu.be/C1fe2KLNbBY>) from the astronauts
3. Cleo’s anxiousness of the newcomers | the astronauts desperate to fix their spaceship

4. Cleo daring to make contact with the one stranger | Commander Malaika determined to find a solution
5. Cleo and Abigail beginning to bond
6. Malaika's heightened sense of protection taking over her actions | Abigail's wonder at Cleo | Cleo's confusion at Malaika
7. Cleo and Abigail defying Commander Malaika | Malaika's scepticism
8. Malaika's realisation that Cleo possesses the Heartstone
9. Malaika revealing her realisation to Abigail, insistent on doing what it takes to get the stone | Flight Engineer Abigail insisting the two do the right thing and ask
10. The explanation of the importance of the Heartstone
11. Commander Malaika's frustration and willingness to steal the Heartstone | Cleo and Flight Engineer Abby's shock at Commander Malaika's actions
12. Cleo fighting back – willing to harm the astronauts | Flight Engineer Abby's plea to Cleo
13. Cleo's disappointment and anger at the astronauts | Commander Malaika's relief | Flight Engineer Abigail's anger at Malaika
14. Flight Engineer Abigail's attempt to reconcile with Cleo | Cleo's distrust of the astronauts
15. Remorse for her actions, from Commander Malaika \ slow development of forgiveness
16. A conversation, or development of understanding, of the struggles Earth was facing
17. Cleo realising her new friend's life was in danger | the understanding from the astronauts that the Heartstone is not theirs to take
18. Cleo's self-less action of handing over the stone

19. An understanding and friendship between the three

At the beginning, this scene went on for nearly half an hour. During rehearsals and conversations, we were able to simplify the scene and show the most important parts. The performers used moments that would express their characters, and the contrast between them. They also used moments which would build the story and add complex situations (such as, questioning whether it is right to steal the Heartstone if their Earth is dying).

“We have been exploring and fine tuning the idea of Abby and I exploring Lascelles and her planet. It has been nice figuring out my character more, exploring the desperation of wanting to save the planet (though not in the best way) and creating a better relationship between Abby’s character and me. With this scene I also think it becomes clearer the character differences between Abby and me. Her character is more kind hearted. Mine is more hard heart, controlling (as a captain) and a but ruthless (ready to steal instead of asking). We add some humour which I think is needed, kind of like comedic relief in serious moments.” (Extract from Malaika’s journal)

“We developed a very cute scene between [Lascelles], Malaika and myself. This is where I felt my character’s personality is most visible. But this is also the scene where (I feel) the audience will see the contrast between my character and Malaika’s character. She is pure at heart and brave. In this scene, [Lascelles’] extra-terrestrial life character grows a liking towards my character. I really like this scene, it’s very cute. I also enjoy watching [Lascelles] and Lindi work on their solo’s and seeing how Jamie helps them incorporate sign language in their actions. Makes me want to have a solo of my own, lol.” (Extract from Abigail’s journal)

I only received my performer’s journals after the performances. This was very touching to read, how Abigail would have enjoyed a solo with Sign Language. Had I been aware of this, I would have found a way to incorporate a solo moment with Sign Language for her. As previously mentioned, she was one of the performers to naturally take to my SASL teachings, and she was always attempting to incorporate vocabulary. I believe she would have done a fantastic job.

It was interesting to read Malaika and Abigail's thoughts on this process of the creation of this scene. I was unsure of what the activity would produce. This was one of the more successful processes, I thought, used to elicit material and structure.

2.3.2.4 Creation of the Moon

I have known Lindi throughout her undergraduate study years. I have seen her audition three times: twice for the Honours Directing exams, and lastly for my MA exam. At each audition, she performed a spoken extract, however, she also choreographed a 2-minute dance. Her choreography is greatly influenced by her hip-hop training. She has a dance crew and competes in various dance competitions. Knowing this from the beginning, I wanted her to do a solo scene.

I originally thought of finding a way to use a celestial being to influence her 'character' and movements. However, I decided against it as I did not want two characters being formed around the same idea of a planet spirit (like Lascelles' 'Cleo' from Planet Heartstone). To avoid another planet, I wanted to experiment with other objects in space like asteroids, stars or moons. I thought a moon may suit Lindi best, and so I suggested it to her. While discussing how she viewed the moon, I was pleasantly surprised to see how much she connected with the moon. Growing up on a farm in the Karoo, she had a connection with rural life, and nature. Relaxing outside with her family on warm summer evenings allowed her the chance to regularly converse under the moon. After moving to Stellenbosch to pursue her Drama and Theatre Studies degree, she developed a habit of sitting on her windowsill every evening and looking out to the moon. This was a sweet moment of recognition and respect for the moon.

The initial process of developing the moon character came from me questioning Lindi about what she thought the moon would see, especially looking at Earth. After some thought, Lindi and I matched some signs to what she thought the moon would see. The idea was for

the Moon to wake up and start playing its daily game: taking out it's telescope, looking at things on Earth, and trying to copy what she saw. For the second part of her original sequence, she connected with a different sense: that of hearing. The Moon went from being able to see everything clearly, to being 'blinded' (by the pollution of the Earth), to realising that their hearing sense had become much more acute. These are some of the signs: MOON, BRIGHT, TELESCOPE, BUTTERFLY (<https://youtu.be/7V8YohuzPBk>) (which, together, we changed to DRAGONFLY (<https://youtu.be/V5LNkM8U1Zk>). WINGS, MONKEY, GORILLA, CHILD, SOCCER, BALL, PLAY (<https://youtu.be/L1iOwjfB7k4> or <https://youtu.be/-2mJ6iVDQk>), CAT, DARK, HEAR, RAIN, WOLF, HOWL and MUSIC. Lindi's moon took on a childlike persona: innocent and playful. Her moves covered large distances in the space, and when making her way around an object (such as jumping over the table), there was a muscular, childish excitement to the movement. The use of the table was entirely Lindi's idea: one day at a rehearsal she brought one in and began using it. I saw no reason to stop her from using it.

The sequence was to represent the following happenings:

1. (On the table, lying down), the Moon is ASLEEP
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXIC3QqT6WI>).
2. Wakes up, showing to opposite sides MOON (as a stretch). She shows BRIGHT to show it is her 'daytime' to get up.
3. The Moon gets up, stretches some more, and looks through her TELESCOPE. She aims it to look at the space which is Earth.
4. She sees a dragonfly and signs DRAGONFLY.
5. From there, she gently moves the sign around, recreating the action of the wings of a dragonfly. In her sequence, she uses the sign for WINGS
(<https://youtu.be/TsopT3j3wok>), and stretches her arms out.

6. She stops and takes out her TELESCOPE again, looking. She spots a monkey.
7. The Moon proceeds to use three signs, MONKEY (<https://youtu.be/WXTdVWvoR5g>), CHIMPANZEE, GORILLA (consecutively) and produces them while on haunches and moving her body like a monkey would (on a lower level than humans would). She shakes her head, amused at the animals.
8. For a third time she pulls out her TELESCOPE. This time she sees children playing a game of ball.
9. The Moon runs around the area, setting up a soccer field area. She signs CHILD++ PLAY, and smoothly transitions into the action of playing soccer, and using the sign for SOCCER in her playing.
10. For the fourth time, the Moon grabs her TELESCOPE and looks to Earth. There she sees a cat.
11. The Moon runs to her table and lies on it like a cat. She stretches and curls up her back.
12. When she gets up, she shows the sign for CAT and makes a sort of meow. She plays around with the idea of a cat stretching on the ground and hunching its back while hissing.
13. When the Moon is finished with this imitation, she tries to look through her TELESCOPE again. However, she finds a problem. While holding her TELESCOPE, moving it back and forth between eyes, she realises something is not right, because she cannot see Earth clearly.
14. She waves a hand in front of her face, looking past it (as if showing she's 'going blind'). She shows DARK, and in terror runs to hide under her table.

15. She spends a few moments under the table, being sad at what has happened. Then, she perks up, one hand showing HEAR (<https://youtu.be/2bP31NcX6aw>).
16. She becomes interested and listens closely. She hears RAIN.
17. She created a slight sequence, her hands imitating a soft shower.
18. She shows HEAR again, this time hearing a wolf howl.
19. She jumps on the table and transitions from WOLF (<https://youtu.be/doRrItl3uac>) to HOWL++. With each howl, she leans further and further back (until her torso is on her legs).
20. Lastly, she hears music. With her hands showing MUSIC (<https://youtu.be/hJhhT4DBMEE>), she walks/dances around in time with the music, closing her eyes and enjoying the sound.
21. She finds her way back to the table, and lies down as she did at the beginning, still showing MUSIC.
22. She then sings a rendition of 'The Moon Song' (sung by Scarlett Johansson and Joaquin Phoenix in the 2013 movie *Her*), while the astronauts travel past her and gesture for the audience to follow them out of The Lab.

During the fourth week of rehearsals, Lindi raised a concern regarding how she story was being shaped. She felt, showing the loss of sight may be a sensitive subject, especially for someone who lost their hearing. It concerned her that the portrayal would upset someone. This did not concern me too much, as we often work with sensitive subjects in the arts: religion, sex, death, revenge, etcetera. As long as our intentions were not malicious, I did not think it should be a problem. However, realising that it was continuing to worry her, we opted to for a different growth for the character, while still incorporating some of the features Lindi had already developed. After giving Lindi some time on her own, she came to me with a suggestion. Following a similar storyline, instead of being blinded by pollution and losing

sight, there would be a ‘disaster’. She also brought me a soundtrack, of three mixed songs. Lindi mixed the soundtrack, with the middle disaster section, being a song based on the krump³⁰ music style. With her hip-hop background, Lindi wanted to incorporate a contrasting dance style to her piece. Encouraging Lindi to use her prior dance experiences to develop a sequence is reminiscent of Bone Marrow Theatre’s approach of incorporating their performers dance experiences in their productions. Lindi naturally found ways of incorporating her hip-hop style in her Moon sequence, without forcing her personal style on the work. Rather, her work lead up to a incorporate a successful moment style change.

Over the course of the rest of the rehearsals, the Moon sequence had three ‘movements’: the waking up game, the meteor, and the music. For the next few weeks, each section was developed one by one and later strung together and adjusted as needed. The signs Lindi used were meant to be incorporated into her movements in a softer way that flowed than the signing that as used by the astronauts (obvious and at times harsh). In Lindi’s final sequence, she only signed a single interrogative (question) sentence: ACCIDENT HAPPEN (<https://youtu.be/W688KDI2iGw>) WHY (https://youtu.be/0No-Bw_Li1E) _le³¹. All her other signs were singular and incorporated into her movement.³²

Lindi would come to rehearsals early or spend extra time during the evening in the movement room, to choreograph her sequence. She would create a section, then bring it to me to observe and comment on. This was very different to the other performers, as they practiced and explored during a scheduled rehearsal section. Lindi developed parts of the performance on her own, and every time we met up for rehearsals, I could clearly see she had

³⁰ An American street-dance style, with harsh and exaggerated movements.

³¹ le_ indicates a wh-question. See p. 35 (under the subheading: 2.3.2 *Teaching of SASL and the Incorporation of Sign Language in the Performance*) to view the meaning of the terms I use while glossing a SASL sentence in English.

³² See the script in chapter three for her final SASL script.

choreographed and added something new. I thoroughly enjoyed this, because it meant I was seeing something she was comfortable with on her own, and I was not observing ‘moving-because-I-have-to-move’ movements from her. It was instinctive rather than forced or mechanical. Lindi also challenged herself with spins and walkovers, which her body was not used to, forcing herself to become more and more flexible each week to be able to successfully execute the moves.

2.3.3 *Puppetry and Object Work*

My introduction to puppetry came during my first year in the Drama and Theatre Studies course (2015). I had the amazing opportunity of being cast in Andrico Goosen’s Honours production, *Hamletmachine* by Heiner Müller. Andrico incorporated puppetry and object work throughout the performance. I did not operate a puppet as such, but controlled sounds onstage, and had an object work scene. This allowed me to observe the other cast members’ exploring and interacting with their puppets. The primary puppeteers were Daniel Luckhoff Wessels and Keanen Engel, along with Andrico, controlling the Ophelia puppet, while Nicol Steyn interacted with the Ophelia puppet. Nicol’s main puppet was a baby doll. During my object work scene, I interacted with objects such as a feather duster, traffic cones and a mini dustpan and brush. I found it challenging to focus solely on the objects and find interesting ways of using them.

My second encounter with intense object work came in 2017 while working on *Unfettered* with Dr Prigge-Pinaar. The cast was tasked to build structures with various coffee cans during some rehearsal sessions, and to find ways of making a path with the cans for one of the performers to walk on. This was an interesting exploration for me, as we had to specifically keep in mind the safety of the actress walking on the tins (which I felt gave me a

different kind of awareness to my space and movements), as well as the visibility of the movements we were attempting to create.

Besides these two encounters, I personally had never attempted to do puppetry or intense object manipulation work. I never felt completely comfortable and in control – I felt I had a lack of training to ‘do justice’ to the form.

In 2018 I attended a performance of *Beloofde Land* (written by Louis Roux and Andrico Goosen, directed by Oliver James Hymans) at The Shed, Stellenbosch. Not only an inspiring plot, but the performance was too. I was in awe of the technicality of the puppets and movements involved: a large-scale segmented whale, a ladder ship with a plastic sail as the ocean, different scale puppets for the two main characters, ominous lantern fish and the absolute wonder of floating jellyfish. The performance amazed me and my interest in puppets and objects was sparked. Puppets represent characters, situations and characteristics – either adding to an already existing voice or adding a new additional voice to the play (Beam, 2013: n.p.). It is a dynamic and visual way exploring and presenting a story. They have the ability to create atmosphere: mysterious (such as *Beloofde Land*’s lantern fish), humorous (a puppet looking at the puppeteer, to the audience and back to the puppeteer) or fearful (a puppet shaking – giving it a shivering effect) (Pearce & Hardiman, 2012: p. 439). Interestingly, the use of puppets adds a sense of childishness, or youthfulness, to a performance. Puppets have the “unique ability to connect with all manner of people at a childlike level” (Pearce & Hardiman, 2012: p. 439). Because of this, *Mission: Heartstone* widened its target audience.

Pearce & Hardiman (2012: p. 439) conclude that puppets “can facilitate the bridging of cultural, religious, linguistic, social or racial barriers”. Puppets are not merely childish toys. They are carriers of a story and can be related to by anyone. Many productions have used puppets to make the bridge between a story/topic and the audience smaller. Kruger (2012: p. 179) discusses a play, *The Hobo*, which was performed at the *Artscape*, and quotes:

“The production was based on an original idea by Mike Chase, using the concept of combining the mime and marionette as the Hobo and his conscience, which are inseparable. Because there are neither objects nor words used, other than illusions created by mime, one’s imagination is stimulated into an acute awareness of expression beyond the barriers of language, space and time. Although this production only applied mime and music to replace the spoken text, the absence of words has become a feature in contemporary puppetry as an artistic expression in which visual imagery created through puppetry and multimedia techniques are frequently applied. In a performance such as *Ouborous* (2010, 2011), which was mentioned above, Janni Younge replaced dialogue with movement, projections and puppets to portray the lovers moving through time and space.”

For *Mission: Heartstone*, we aimed to bridge the complex linguistic barrier, and puppets were a means of doing so.

Puppets also incorporated iconicity within their designs. If the puppet looks extremely different from what it is meant to represent, the audience does not connect the puppet to it. For example, if the puppet was to represent a cat: if the cat it was representing was silver and white, with long hair, but the puppet was ginger with short hair, the connection between the puppet and character/objects is not made. They seem to then be separate entities. Puppets are either miniature- or large-sized representations of characters/objects. If the acting space is relatively big, and the puppets small (such as finger puppets), extreme detail on the puppet would be difficult to notice from the audience. Therefore, using few but key features of the character/object would allow the audience to associate it with character/object it is representing.

The puppets in the play included a design element which linked them to the character/object they represented. Each astronaut had an astronaut puppet. The finger puppets included features such as eyes, a mouth, helmet and spacesuit – a classic astronaut outfit. Each puppet was assigned a particular colour (Malaika’s blue, Jenna’s green, Abigail’s red). These colours were then incorporated into the astronauts’ costume, by including coloured

piping (a line down the side of the jumpsuit) and ribbing (around the wrists and ankles). The finger puppet and wooden pole space shuttle were made from the same felt material, and incorporated the same shape, design elements and colours. The basic design of a space shuttle was clear. Again, using the same elements on each puppet linked the two to each other.

In the past, in Puppet Theatre, the norm was for the puppeteer to be hidden from the audience, such as by tables, booths and staging that lends to hiding the puppeteer (Cohen, 2017: p. 278). The puppeteers of glove/hand puppets often hid behind a scrim (Beam, 2013: n.p.). However, modern puppetry has incorporated the puppeteer on stage to further enrich the performance. Cart puppetry (*kuruma ningyō*) was developed for this, as well as to be ‘economically visible’ – to reduce the number of puppeteers and allow more puppet visibility (Orenstein, 2018: p. 3). Cohen (2017: p. 278) states about the use of shadow puppets and the visible puppeteer: “Fornace spoke about how Manual Cinema’s strategy is to labour to make their shadow puppets breathe and then flip the perspective so that this work is made visible to the audience.”

The idea in *Mission: Heartstone* was never to hide the puppeteers from the audience. Because the performers were constantly moving and using their bodies to create images, the puppets became part of the imagery. If the performers had to hide their bodies while executing moments of puppetry, the interesting and creative movements they worked on would be lost. It seemed as if there would be a loss of potential in what we could show the audience, if the performers’ bodies had to be obscured. Instead, we decided to incorporate the puppets into the show in such a way that the exchanging of puppets between characters, and the transformation from actor-character to puppet-character and back be a prominent feature. This way, the performers did not have to stress about hiding the puppet from the audience during a change over, but rather, they had to explore ways to smoothly and elegantly present a change over.

There was also the incorporation of elements of Object Theatre in the play:

“Object theatre (sometimes referred to as object puppetry) uses found objects to create a story with characters. Instead of objects and/or puppets specifically designed for the narrative, object theatre deliberately uses everyday objects, either as is or transformed into other things, requiring the skill of the performer and the imagination of the audience for its success.” (The Drama Teacher, 2019: Object Theatre)

The astronaut puppets were created for the performance of *Mission: Heartstone*. They had to represent the characters, in a smaller form. The performers had to give these puppets emotions and life. Adhering to the above definition, I would place the Heartstone, Slinky King (a giant slinky, made out of hula-hoops) and the star poles as objects. The performers were not required to manipulate these objects in such a way that they became realistically living (unlike, for example, the astronaut finger puppets). Seeing the objects being used in certain environments indicated to the audience what their function was. For example, the astronauts often repeat that they are searching for the Heartstone. Once the audience becomes aware Cleo has a stone attached to her chest, and that she uses it to draw power, the audience can assume it is the precious life-giving rock. The origin of the Heartstone was born from the exploring with plastic diamond beads. These objects, with no specific significance to the play, influenced Lascelles to start using the plastic diamond bead as the core of her powers.

In Planet Slinky, the importance of the slinkies was not set from the beginning. They were merely a random prop that was given to the performers to observe what sort of material they could create. Although the Slinky King was made by the crew, it was merely a larger scale of the slinkies. Because the planet-performers had incorporated normal sized slinkies into their creatures, when the Slinky King came out, the audience was able to make the connection that it was a giant slinky for the characters to play with. When this object was played with, the “performer[s] do not have to play big emotions. In connection with the

situation and objects the viewer understands the meaning and feels the emotions himself”
(Kalda, 2012: p. 15). The Slinky King takes on a life of its own.

2.3.3.1 Felt Finger Puppets

I found a packet of felt finger puppets in a craft shop. Coincidentally, there were three astronauts, and one spaceship (each 10x5 cm). I decided these would be a perfect impulse and starting point for the astronauts in the play. From the movement the performers were exploring with, it became clear that whenever the puppets were to be used on stage, the performers would be visible. Hand puppets rely on the fingers and wrists for animation and movement (Beam, 2013: n.p.). They do not have as much movement potential as a hand puppet which possesses a moving mouth, or a marionette which has many joints for movement. In this regard, the puppets would require a high awareness of which position it was facing, and where it would be most visible to the audience. Later in the rehearsal process, we made use of a bigger spaceship puppet, on a wooden pole. The three finger puppets, as well as the spaceship on the wooden pole, were exclusively used by the astronauts. The performers had to manipulate the puppets in such a way, that the puppets would take on the lives of the characters (of the astronauts). The astronauts could either be the ‘human’ or the ‘puppet’.



Figure 2. 8

The original finger puppets I bought, which were used during rehearsals to spare the second set of finger puppets for performance evenings.



Figure 2. 9

The three astronaut puppets that were used in the three performances. When made, they were designed to be slightly bigger than the originals – merely to make the finger puppet more visible for the audience.



Figure 2. 10

The spaceship puppet (used in the 3 performances) was reinforced with a wooden stand, to stop it from falling over.



Figure 2. 11

Spaceship puppet with thin wooden rod, manipulated mainly by Malaika.



Figure 2. 12

A comparison of all the puppets used during the process and performances.

The performers often had to be reminded to present their puppets to the audience. During the initial rehearsals, the performers had a sense of realism about their acting style for the piece: everything was contained, and transitions became ‘invisible’ from performer to puppet. This worked against the performance, as the moment where the astronaut becomes the puppet, or the puppet becomes the astronaut, is a vital part of the performance which plays around with scale and object handling. It was important to let the performers realise they could make a show of the transition and handing over of puppets from one to the other. When the performers had this confirmation from me, it offered many new opportunities to play within the transition. The puppets became more visible to the audience, and the transition become part of the sequence (as opposed to merely a moment where the performers had to move from A to B as quickly as possible).

2.3.3.1 Paper-Puppet Exercise Led by Lindi

Lindi mentioned to me that for one of their third-year subjects, the group was learning about Puppetry. She explained how they were given pieces of paper and how they had to explore breathing life into the paper: they had to try this with the paper in various states (straight and neat, and crunched up and unravelled). Once the group had a better understanding of how to bring an object alive, they were asked to create a story, and give voices (sounds) to the puppet.

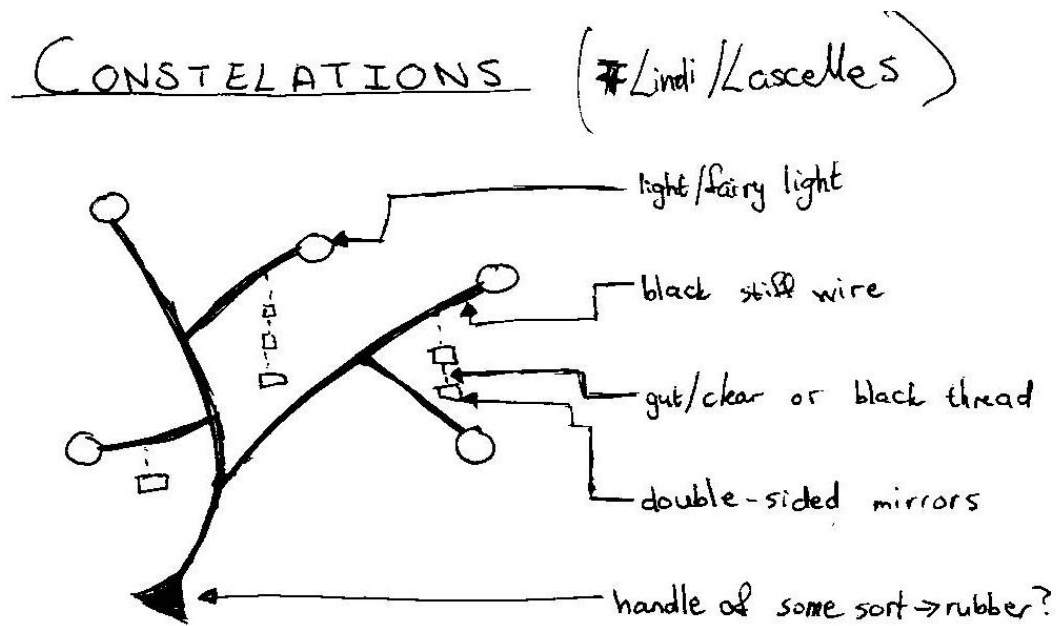
I had never had similar classes in my undergraduate year, and these techniques of learning, and practising, puppetry were new to me. Roughly two weeks before showtime, I tasked Lindi with leading an exercise, based on her class experience. Although relatively late to experiment, I felt the exercise would be useful and allow the performers to experience and interact with their puppets and objects with a different view. Lindi spent a half hour with the entire cast, leading them through the exercise as a group. This allowed the cast to have a breather from me leading an exercise, but it also offered Lindi a change to lead the group. This assigned a leadership responsibility to Lindi, as I was entrusting her to use her knowledge and experience to help better the cast. Also, as Lindi was a cast member, it minimized the idea of ‘director and cast’ to rather ‘older-cast-member and cast-member’. Abigail commented in her journal: “I really enjoyed when Lindi led our warm-ups, it was really fun and it was a cool way for the cast to bond”.

Malaika, Jenna and Abigail benefited mostly from this exercise, as they were the puppeteers in the performance. In them, there was a heightened sensitivity to what their bodies were conveying, in relation to their puppets. There was a bit more awareness of their own breathing, body language and facial expressions. They were also able to experiment how to make a puppet breathe and become livelier. They had a chance to experiment with a different puppet (the paper) and to then transfer the new skills, and awareness, to their

astronaut and space shuttle puppets. In the rest of the group, there was no major shift in the performers' manipulation of the puppets – I would venture a guess this is because the 'control of a puppet' was not 'applicable' to them in the performance, hence did not actively see the need to draw as much from the exercise as the performers who were manipulating a puppet.

2.3.3.2 Dancing with the Stars - Departure & Return Scenes

As the idea of space was taking shape, I decided to include mobile star structures. Their movement would aid in representing the distances travelled by the astronauts, but also allow for the astronauts to interact with 'the universe'. During the performance of *Beloofde Land* I watched, there was a breath-taking scene where jellyfish puppets 'swam' around on stage – I can only assume coloured paper or plastic was used to form the jellyfish, which were attached to a longish pole. The materials and puppetry made it look as if the jellyfish were floating in the air. I wanted this same effect with my stars. My initial design consisted of a pole-like structure, fairy lights, and hanging two-sided mirrors. I imagined glowing balls and little mirrors reflecting any light available. This would allow the puppet to 'breathe'.



- something reflective
- if room is dark, it can twinkle light stars
- one in a hand / one for two hands (actors use it)

Figure 2. 13

My initial design I showed to Lulu and Alexander. This concept reminded them of a similar existing prop.

When discussing the possibility of making two of these, Lulu and Alexander suggested the use of a pre-made props that were used in Marthinus Basson's *Die Gangsters*. They were two long poles, with multiple moving sections, with various sized polystyrene foam spheres on the tips of the wooden sticks. These looked like appropriate substitutions for my design. The crew would merely remake the polystyrene spheres and paint them with glow-in-the-dark paint.

The first time the star-poles were used in the performance, they were controlled by Lindi and Lascelles. Abigail was paired with Lindi, because she has often worked with Lascelles before and I wanted her to interact with a different performer. Lascelles was paired with Jenna and Malaika. Jenna and Malaika used the big spaceship to explore the stars.

At the beginning of rehearsing, the sequence of this scene was extremely long. This is not necessarily a bad thing; however, the length was filled with wasted space and unchoreographed and unintentional movements.

One of the games I gave the performers to play was to ‘think float’ and to always, somehow, have one foot in the air - even if it was just five centimetres from the ground. The rules of the game were easily forgotten and discarded. I assume it was because the performers were concentrating on not getting hit by the star poles, that they forgot what they should be doing. One of the problems was that there was no change in rhythm in the sequence – for over seven minutes, it was the same intention and movements reoccurring. After watching a rehearsal run of the performance, my supervisor spent a few moments with the cast and me. As an outsider, his opinion was invaluable. He gave us a brief demonstration of how the performers could play and explore with the star poles objects – from allowing the other performer to touch and move the star pole, to creating a dance with the star pole and the performers. In the end, each pair had their own sequence that they followed, sticking to the same formula:

1. Star-performers enter → stationary (4 seconds)
2. Star-performers move on spot → slowly (4 seconds)
3. Star-performers move around space → slowly (4 seconds)
4. Star-performers and astronauts group up
5. Star-performers and astronauts → fast
 - a. Astronauts can show FAST (<https://youtu.be/P42W1Ab69DI>)
6. Star-performers and astronauts slow down → Lascelles cues for Lindi to slow down again
 - a. Astronauts can show SLOW (<https://youtu.be/ycoRCjheIzU>)
7. Star-performers pass on star poles to astronauts

8. Astronauts pass back the star poles to the star-performers
9. The star-performers move quickly again
10. The star--performers exit → Lascelles cues Lindi to stop and exit the stage. The astronauts follow.

The second time, both poles were controlled by Jenna. This scene was used to create a transition from Abigail and Malaika's travel back to Earth and the introducing of Lindi's Moon for her final scene.



Figure 2. 14

Departure Star Dance: the beginning of the paring off of the astronauts with their allotted stars.



Figure 2.15

Departure Star Dance: the star-performers and performers had set, shorter, choreography, attempting to alternate the rhythm of the piece.



Figure 2.16

Return Star Dance: Jenna is controlling both the star poles, while Malaika and Abigail bring the table in. Lindi is also brought in, by moving in with the stars (moved by Jenna).

2.3.4 *The Incorporation and Importance of Mime*

Sign Language was, and often still is (by the general public who is not educated in language and linguistics) considered as pantomime. However, when linguists in the 1950's became interested in Sign Language, they discovered that Sign Languages are filled with grammatical properties (Baker, van de Bogaerde, Pfau & Schermer, 2016: p. 1). Börstell, Sandler & Aronoff, (2019) discuss the initial battle of Sign Language's language status:

“Sign language linguistics is one of the younger areas of linguistic research, having been a field in its own right only since the 1960s, when the first research investigating sign languages from a linguistic perspective was published. Since sign language was historically considered not to be language at all, but merely a gesture-based aid for basic communication, early research was focused on demonstrating the linguistic status of sign languages—that they are indeed languages in their own right equivalent to spoken languages.”

During my initial literature review, I looked at books from the library shelves about masks, puppetry and out of curiosity, the *London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art* (LAMDA)'s 'Mime and Improvisation' book, by Alison Muir and Patricia Hammond. The very first line of the introduction chapter states: “The use of gesture is a universal communication and one which harks back to the beginning on time” (Muir & Hammond, 1997: p. 9). This struck a chord and while reading the various mime activities described in the book, I found ways in which mine can be connected to Sign Language. I want to make it clear that I am not calling Sign Language a pantomime or a mime act. With the linguistics background I have, I fully believe Sign Language deserves its status as a full-fledged language: while they may be young and not advanced in the same way as many spoken/written languages, they still have sufficient properties to be considered linguistic. I am merely comparing the visuospatial nature of the language, to that of mime, a highly visual arts form.

Signers use manual and non-manual features to communicate. All of the non-manual features that a signer uses originates in the face or torso. Speakers use ‘everyday gestures’ when they communicate – whether it be for descriptive purposes, emphasis or to demonstrate an action or action (Ünlüer & Özcan, 2013: p. 277). These gestures are commonly used as an assist to the spoken word, or in isolation to speech to perform a non-verbal communication. It is an ‘extra’ method of communication, and not always required. A Signer, however, must use their hands to create signs. As a result, Signers are hyper-aware of the possibilities and limitations of their hands. They have an awareness of their hand forms and hand movement that a non-Signer will most likely not possess.

Facial expressions (a non-manual feature in Sign Language) are also extremely important to Signers. Raised eyebrows often pose a yes-no questions, while a contraction of the nose-eyebrow muscle indicates a who-question, and so the face, with all its expressions, express emotions and intent. Signers are more prone to noticing expressions of various speeds (macro- and micro- expressions) and signal clarity (the combination and clarity of various facial configurations) because of their intense focus on the human face (Gonzalez, 2019). Specific combination of muscles in the face influences facial expressions. These combinations trigger an emotional response from the person viewing the facial expression. Humans are quite capable of identifying basic emotions linked to the combination of these muscles (Ershadi, Goldstein, Pochedly & Russell, 2018: p. 495). One undergoing study argues that, universally, humans possess a “hardwired emotion signalling system” (Ershadi, Goldstein, Pochedly & Russell, 2018: p. 494). Actors were a vital part in the research: they produced facial expressions they believed to convey the emotion, and participant were asked to identify the emotion.

Facial expression is of paramount importance in Sign Language and in mime, hence the overlap in this chapter. Signing can almost be seen as a type of mime, from a theatrical

point of view. Mime artists, somewhat like the Deaf, disregard the spoken language – they do not rely on vocals to convey a message, but rather the combination of posture, expressions and how clear the body movements. Mimes rely on the accuracy of their ability to represent an object, action or emotion as realistically as possible. As performers, we must be in tune with our body. By putting emphasis on Sign Language, I want my performers to be constantly aware of what their hands and faces are, and are not, doing.

Seeing a few video recordings of *Bone Marrow Theatre* and *Clockfire Theatre Company*, I found their miming styles quite different. For example, *Clockfire Theatre Company* videos radiated crisp and flamboyant stylised movements, while *Bone Marrow Theatre* recordings presented a more subtle and delicate style. I saw two companies, both influenced by Jacques Lecoq's teachings, with extremely different outcomes. Interested in experimenting with mime within my cast, and observing how they interpreted 'mime', I began one rehearsal with a LAMDA mime exercise which focused on facial expressions (Muir & Hammond, 1997: p. 34-36). Because facial expressions are such a vital part of human communication, whether spoken or signed, I felt it important to explore facial expressions. This way the cast would begin their mime exploration, as well as focus on facial expressions.

Everyone sat somewhere in the room, facing any direction, and made a happy face, followed by a sad face, then an angry face. The performers explored what their faces did with each emotion – what muscles contracted, which were relaxed and how their faces reacted to moving between the emotions. This allowed me to observe their initial approach to expressions. Jenna had the most animated face of the group – it was the easiest to see a distinction between her expressions. Caleb, however, was the exact opposite. For performance, an actor has to use their face to convey a message. If one's face remains similar, especially with very contrasted emotions, the message or emotion becomes difficult

to identify. Out of all the performers, I noted that Caleb would probably be the most difficult to illicit major facial changes from.

We then played with the idea of physically reacting to the following scenarios (as suggested in the book (Muir & Hammond, 1997: p. 35): being splashed in the face with water, getting a painful headache, peering out into darkness and looking into a bright light (which was interpreted as sunlight). Next, we played with showing an external reaction to these scenarios: watching a tiny insect on the ground, looking at the insect through a microscope, smelling a flower and then eavesdropping on a conversation that you should not be involved in. Finally, still focusing on facial expressions, we looked at internal reactions to the following scenarios (and how that would affect the facial muscles): how their nerves affect them before an audition, coming home after a fight and sitting in their rooms alone and finally, receiving a surprise present from someone very special to them.

These above exercises are used to make performers aware of the use of their head and face, as well as allow them to “interpret reactions to different sensations” (Muir & Hammond, 1997: p. 34). In this exercise, Jenna was once again the most animated and active with her facial muscles. Lindi used much larger expressions in these activities. However, she had a bigger sense of realism, or human-ness to her expressions (as opposed to a cartoonish animation from Jenna). Malaika, Abigail and Lascelles had moderate differences in their expressions. Some reactions took much longer to develop (such as the reaction to receiving a present from someone special) for these three, when compared to Jenna and Lindi. Malaika, Abigail and Lascelles tended to create a long build-up, before the aim (or focused on) emotion occurred. Then, there was an apparent shift in emotion. Caleb exhibited quite shallow facial changes again during these exercises. He did not exhibit many highs or lows but had a relatively even baseline. I have seen Caleb in his acting exams, and I think his

natural tendency is towards realistic and dramatic expressions (intense emotions, on the ‘negative³³’ emotions scale).

Some rehearsals later, I decided to re-visit the exercise, but this time, have the performers first draw the individual emotions. They were asked to draw a face, and to draw in any defining features of the emotions: anything that they thought would easily make the emotion identifiable to a viewer.

They were asked to draw six faces, one by one, and to not discuss too in-depth someone else’s drawing. After everyone was finished, we discussed the emotions and their representing pictures. Everyone showed their corresponding picture, made the expression on their own face and commented what the similarities were among the pictures. Two facial features, the eyebrows and the lips, were commented on continuously. Jenna notes in her journal, “Eyebrows are especially important!” The performers found that from simply focusing on these two features, they could derive the emotion. For example, the angry faces had furrowed, tense eyebrows, while the happy faces had more rounded, lighter eyebrows. A tight pursed lips or frown correlated with a ‘negative³⁴’ emotion, while smiles and upturned lip corners correlated with ‘positive’ emotion. This realisation was important because the performers became more aware of what muscles in their faces they were using and the complexity of emotions they could portray with merely their faces. After this exercise, all of

³³ See next footnote for explanation.

³⁴ Negative emotions: “Pam (2013) defines negative emotions ‘as an unpleasant or unhappy emotion which is evoked in individuals to express a negative effect towards an event or person.’” (Mead, 2019: What Are Negative Emotions). These are emotions such as anger, disgust, fear, sadness, embarrassment, guilt and shame. Positive emotions: “Positive emotion may be considered as any feeling where there is a lack of negativity, such that no pain or discomfort is felt. Frederickson (2009) identifies the ten most common positive emotions as joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe and love” (Changing Minds, 2019).

the performers' faces became more active and clearer. It made their actions and emotions more captivating.

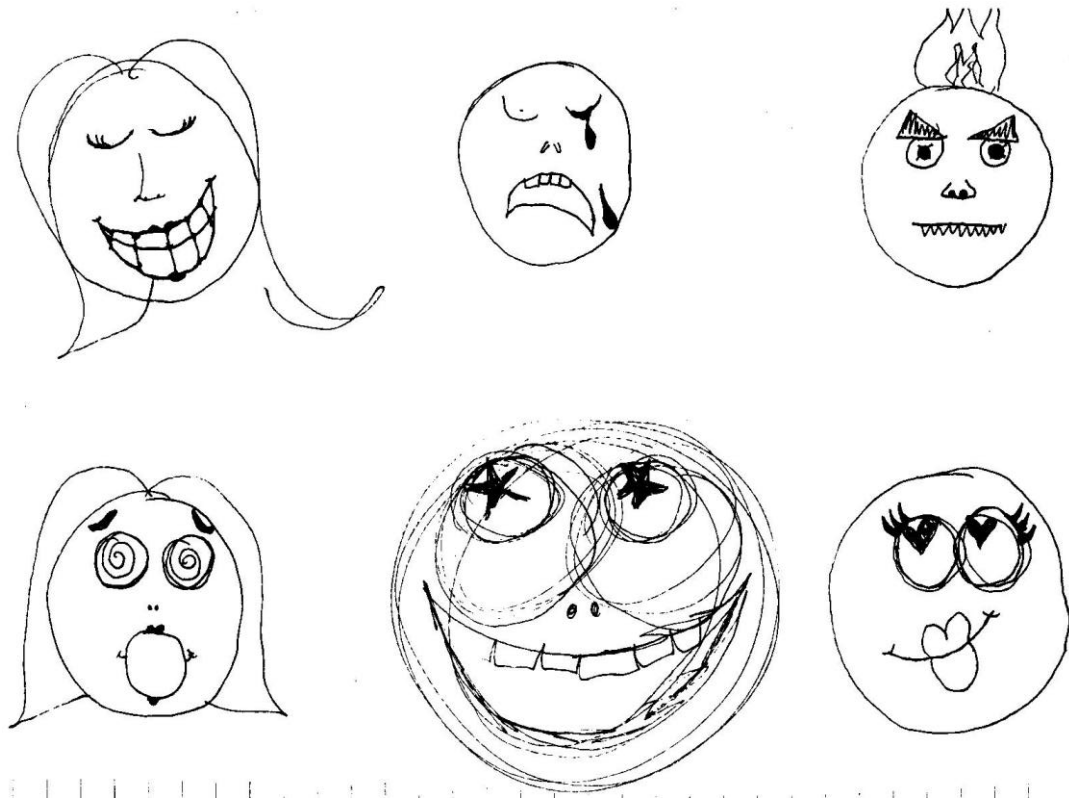


Figure 2. 17

Jenna's drawings of emotions. Top from left to right: happiness, sadness, anger. Bottom from left to right: scared, excitement, love. "Expressions are crucial!" she states in her journal.

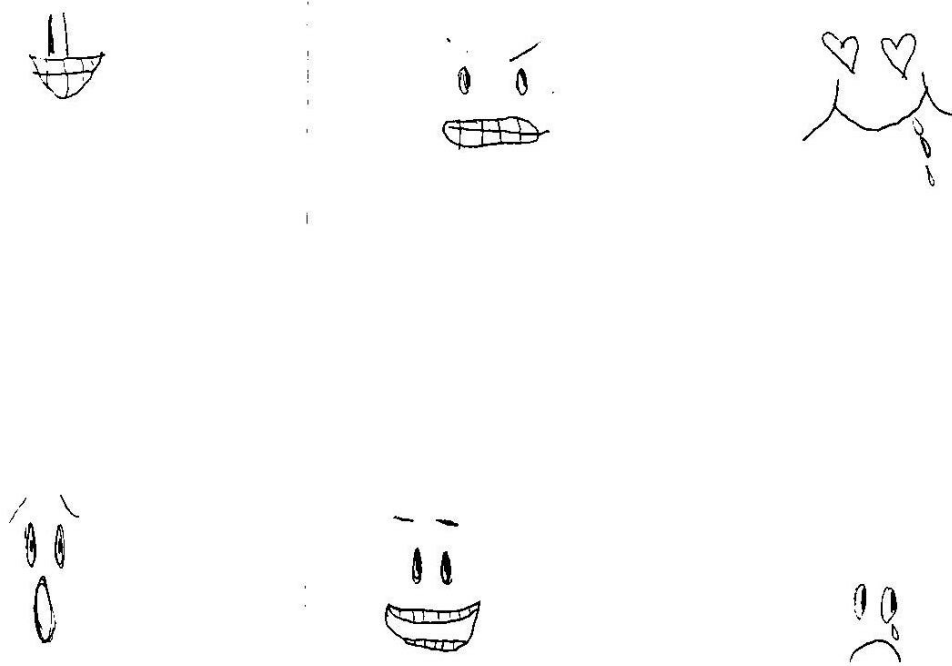


Figure 2. 18

Malaika's drawings of emotions. Top from left to right: happiness, anger, love. Bottom from left to right: scared, excitement, sadness.

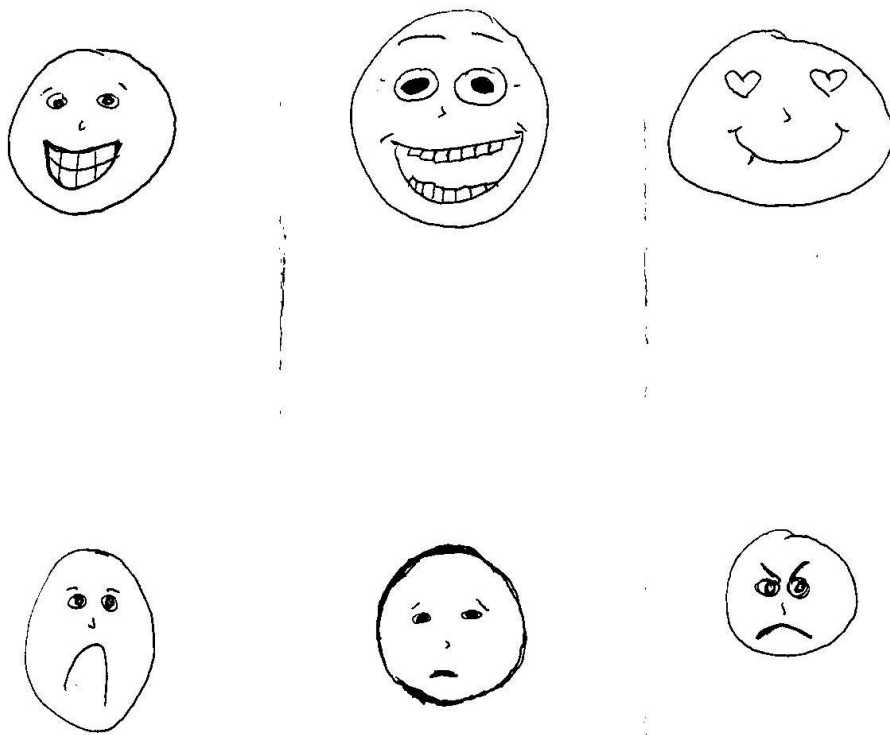


Figure 2. 19

Lascelles's drawings of emotions. Top from left to right: happiness, excitement, love. Bottom from left to right: sadness, scared, anger.

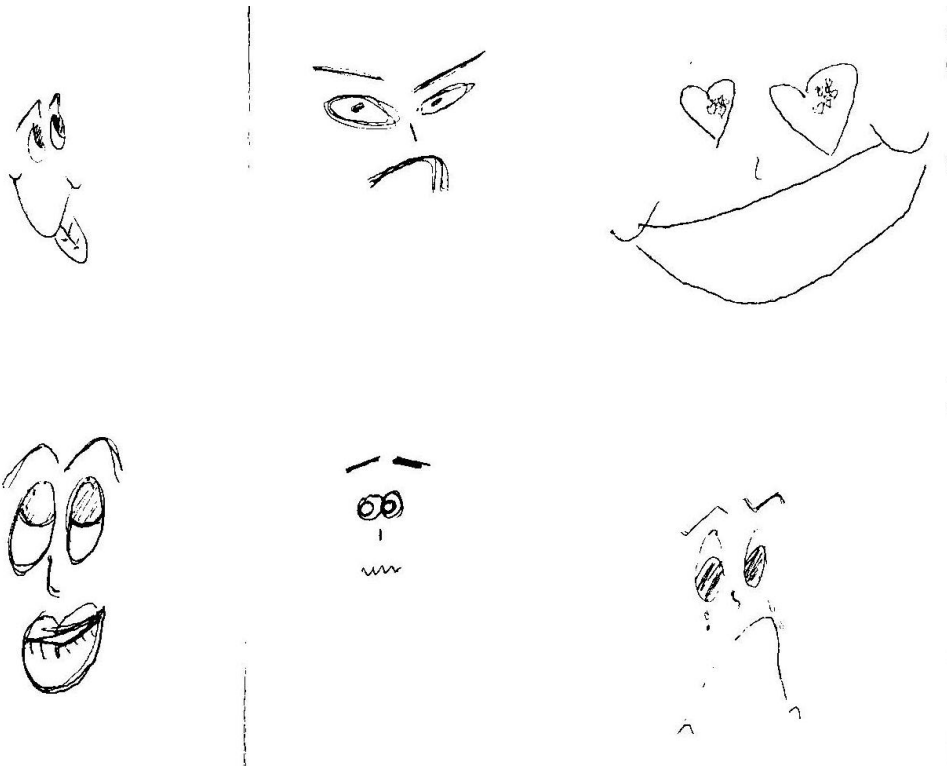


Figure 2. 20

Caleb's drawings of emotions. Top from left to right: excitement, anger and love. Bottom from left to right: happiness, scared and sadness.

A favourite mime and movement exercise, which acted as a warm-up as well as to encourage the performers to be more physically comfortable with each other, was an adaptation of the Washing Machine group exercise from a published exercise book about mime (Muir & Hammond, 1997: p. 56). Each person would become a piece of material (once the costumes were completed, they were able to become their costumes). One by one they are thrown into an imaginary washing machine. Once in, the door closes and the tub slowly fills with soapy water (allowing the performers to rise from the ground), then begins to turn, and as the turning comes to an end, the water drains (prompting the performers to the floor again). The second part, or 'cycle' of the exercise, is when clean water fills the tub, spins and again stops spinning to drain the water. Lastly, in the washing machine, the tub proceeds with a

spin cycle. It starts slowly, moving faster and faster, till suddenly the turbo button is selected. After a brief few moments, the spinning stops and the clothes promptly falls to the bottom of the tub. The performers then take themselves out one-by-one, give themselves a shake, and hang themselves up on a washing line. A mild wind blows, followed by two or three gusts of wind. Once the clothes are dried, they are either neatly folded up and packed away in a cupboard, or ironed and backed away, or merely shaken out again and hung up on a hanger.

Throughout the exercise, the performers had to think about the characteristics of their clothing: the weight, the size, how dirty the clothes initially are, does it float easily, how does the cloth interact with bubbly and soapy water compared to clean water, does it dry quickly, is it easy to fold, how do the clothes move as it gets wetter and wetter as opposed to as it gets drier and drier, and very importantly, how does the material/costume interact with the other materials/costumes in the different stages.

This activity seemed to be a successful way to warm-up the performers, as well as energise the performers. I adjusted the exercise each time, to add variation to it. For example, I would sometimes have the machine surprise ‘pause’ once or twice in a cycle, or instead of a washing-line dry, I would tell the performers “You’re all picked up in a bundle and just thrown into a tumble-drier”. From the second time doing the exercise, I narrated the exercise using the technical team’s names to prompt the performers. I would narrate the activity in a similar manner to:

“Lulu just picked up your costumes and they stink! She throws you in the washing machine one-by-one. Now, she throws in *Omo*, some *Vanish*, and just to make extra sure, *Sunlight*. She closes the lid, and ‘beep’ there the washing machine goes on and slowly fills up with the very bubbly water. And it fills up. And up. And the water is fluffy and light, and the soap is soaking into your fibres. It begins to turn, till it’s on a medium turn. And suddenly Alexander opens the tub lid because he’s curious what Lulu has all thrown in, and the spinning stops. Satisfied, he closes the lid and the spinning continues. The spinning begins to slow down, and the water drains from the tub. The tub has come to a

standstill, while the water is still draining. It continues to drain to the very last drop. Then the tub starts filling up with fresh water again. Feel those clean H₂O molecules between your fibres. The tub begins spinning. First slowly, then on medium speed, then on the fastest washing speed. It then slows down and drains the water again. And it's draining, draining, till the very last drop is out. Finally, the washing machine is on its spinning cycle. The tub slowly begins to spin. First very slowly. Your material is still quite wet – but slowly the water starts spinning off. And the spinning gets faster, and faster, and faster. And it reaches its high spin. Lulu quickly comes into the room, checks her watch and decided she can't wait too long, so she presses the turbo button! And she lets go. But she's still not happy, so she pressed the extra turbo button – the fastest the machine can go! And she lets go and stops the machine. She calls Marloise, Emma and Nic and tells them to grab the clothes and give them a good shake out. So, Marloise, Emma and Nic take you out, give you all a nice good shaking. They grab a hanger and quickly, but neatly, hang you up on the hanger and put you in the dressing room, ready for your next show!"

The cast did this exercise multiple times alone, and in front of the crew. By using the technical team's names, and involving them (even if it was only by mention) made the performers aware that there was another group working on the performance, and to use it create a bit of intimacy between the two groups, as the cast and crew did not often see each other, till the last week of rehearsals. There was an indirect bonding between the group. Incorporating the technical team created a bit of humour in the rehearsal process. Sometimes, when rehearsals felt slow or tense (whether from difficulties outside or inside rehearsals) this exercise seemed to rejuvenate the cast. Though quite physically taxing, there was enjoyment to it. It is important to find activities that can encourage the cast to once again become present and engaged in their work.

2.3.5 *Contact Improvisation*

Tafferner-Gulyas (2015: p. 230) describes contact improvisation as a form of movement which "hovers somewhere between gymnastics, wrestling, capoeira and improvisatory dance" while Engelsrud (2007: p. 60) further defines it as a "mode of movement which is

relaxed, constantly aware and prepared, and on-flowing. [...] They (the dancers) do not strive to achieve results but rather to meet in constantly changing physical reality with appropriate placement and energy”. As ‘improvisation’ implies, the movements which are created are unchoreographed. The movements are built up using the impulses from prior movement - it ‘grow[s] in the movement’ (Tafferner-Gulyas, 2015: p. 230). Typically, it is performed in a pair, or a ‘duet’ (Engelsrud, 2007: p. 60). Joubert (2006: p. 6) further describes it as “’n vorm van beweging wat werk met gewig van die liggaam, kontak, impulse en die vloei van beweging gewoonlik tussen twee persone. [...] net twee liggaam en ‘n oop spasie [word benodig]³⁵”.

Contact improvisation allowed the performers to explore themselves and their partners, by working with each other’s mass, giving and taking, while at the same time exploring how to work with and against gravity to create sequences and still moments. The performers will also able experiment with different rhythms/momentum, within the same duet pair and when a new partner joined.

Partners should be constantly focused and prepared for every possible movement that could be inspired. Touch and weight-work form a fundamental part of contact improvisation. One of the difficulties with this, was the risk of pre-empting movements. While watching the performers, I often caught glimpses of moments when the performers would for a moment be still, as if prompting their partner. While movement does need impulse to occur, just like in dialogue in a play, sometimes those impulses are pushed/forced and often partners attempt to pre-empt movements, without being aware of it. This pre-empted spontaneous movement can

³⁵ English: “a form of movement which works with the the body’s weight, contact, impulses and the flow of movement possible between, usually, two people. [...] just two bodies and an open space [are necessary]” (Joubert, 2006: p. 6).

occur from the performers previously working together, expectations of a movement, or an assumed “culturally appropriate” movement (Engelsrud, 2007: p. 61).

The entire cast was aware of what contact improvisation was (as they had had some experience with it in their Movement classes). As the majority of the cast was in the same year group, I could safely assume they were on a very similar level to each other (excluding the elder Lindi). There was no extreme focus given to contact improvisation, but when we did do contact improvisation exercises, I would play two or three songs (of different rhythms and tones, uninterrupted) and observe the pairs. If I saw a pair struggling, I would advise or suggest alterations to the entire group. For example, if one pair continuously only used one performer as the strong power position base, I would instruct the entire group to attempt to take turns being the power position structure. I felt this non-singling out of a pair was appropriate to the cast, because the pair the comment originated for did not have to feel they were ‘wrong’ or alone (as I did not name anyone, they may have thought that someone else was experiencing a similar thing). Lascelles and Caleb tended to keep their movements low to the ground – usually making them the ‘bottom’ of a structure being created. Abigail easily glided over her partner, and was able to experiment with balancing, with confidence, on her partner.

After the contact improvisations, as I learned to do in my own Movement classes, the pairs were permitted to discuss their encounter first with each other. This allowed them to voice their opinions and observations intimately with their partner. Thereafter, we would come together as a group and discuss what everyone experienced and observed. The cast was able to share how they approached the exploration and how their approaches or implementations of their movements changed depending on partner. It also highlighted favoured movements with partners, as well as moments where they were uncomfortable and uncertain of themselves and where their movement was taking them.

2.3.5.1 Cleo and the Supernova Encounters

Lascelles and Caleb's sequences were built from contact improvisation. After observing them and formulating an idea about their characters and possible storyline, I started working on merging Caleb and Lascelles's character's story. The two seemed to already get along well in social situations, or during discussions of possible ideas for the show. During rehearsals, they often carried the same kind of energy and manner of carrying themselves. When I was present, Lascelles and Caleb often leant towards improvising with each other.

After the two had relatively solid solo sequences, they jammed³⁶ together without knowing the future implications of their character's contact with each other. The idea of allowing Lascelles and Caleb to jam together, during a rehearsal attended by just the two of them, was to allow the two performers to find a connection with each other's bodies and 'normal' movements. These jams lasted for roughly four minutes at a time, shuffling through various songs. After each initial jamming sequence, I asked the pair to think of any moves they found exciting and memorable. When they jammed again, I would ask for them to attempt to find a way to recreate that moment. Many of their movements allowed them to be on an equal footing – neither attempted to solely lead the jam. Both were dominant and equally controlled the sequences of movement.

After about three jamming sessions, I explained to Caleb what the final aim of the scene would be. I explained to him that his character, his Supernova, was to engulf Cleo. Using this information, the pair were set for another jam. Interestingly, the more Caleb attempted to subdue Lascelles, the more offensive she became. The two challenged each

³⁶ Joubert (2006: p. 4) describes 'jam' as "‘n informele manier om kontak improvisasie te beoefen. Dit sluit nie enige opwarmingsoefeninge in nie, maar slegs die proses van gee en ontvang van impulse en onophoudelike beweging wat nie deur die improviseerder vooraf beplan word nie". English: "an informal manner of practicing contact improvisation. It does not include any warm-up exercises, but merely the process of giving and receiving of impulses and continuous movement which is unplanned by the improviser" (Joubert, 2006: p. 4).

other's movements. After this, I made both performers aware of the situation: a destruction of a planet/soul. This caused a change in thinking, as expected, where Lascelles had to navigate a mental and physical minefield for her character: from a powerful regal figure, to extreme protection, to desperation and finally to be overpowered. This was quite contrary to Lascelles initial movements. During the rehearsal, the two summed up their scene as the following³⁷:

Lascelles: "Okay, so I am also trying to essentially stop him. So, there can be moments of me like – "

Caleb: "Definitely. Fight." (*punches his own hand*)

Lascelles: "I try to stop you. And then you overpowering me. And then in the end, it's only me. Like, it can be a story of like, the astronauts, you're trying to suck everyone up, and then I'm like 'Leave!' Then I'm gonna come, basically, and in a way sacrifice myself. But my initial goal is that 'Okay, I'm gonna stop this and still survive.' And then though the tumble, I start to realise I can't get away."

Caleb: "Yes, yes."

Lascelles: "I think there's gotta be moments where I'm trying to get away, get away and then there's gonna be a moment when I'm like, realising, I can't get away now and shluup (*sucking in sound*)."

Caleb: "Shluup, yes."

Caleb and Lascelles created their final meeting sequence first. They had a very strong idea, between the two of them, how they wanted their sequence to look. They built their

³⁷ This dialogue has been transcribed from a video recording that was made during the rehearsal. I have included the relevant information in the dialogue, choosing to exclude irrelevant comments (such as jokes and side comments).

sequence around moves which they had discovered in previous jams and tweaked the moves to now emphasise their changed states. Caleb and Lascelles would often take a few moments away from the group to develop their piece – they also did not particularly seek my presence while trying moves. It was only after they discussed with each other, and attempted sequences, that they would come to me and show me what they had developed. This was quite a contrast compared the other performers, as I was mostly present when they were doing group work. Although they did not say they did not want me there while figuring a sequence out, I felt an air of distance being formed by them – or rather, one of a moment of privacy, where they could trial-and-error by themselves. When they were ready, they came to me and after showing me we would discuss the sequence.

When creating the sequence, Lascelles and Caleb focused on their bodies moving. There was no incorporation of SASL from their side. Although they were present for the most relevant SASL sessions, there was a forgetting, or ignoring, of signs (though there was an attempt to use signs throughout the rehearsal period). A number of reasons, I suspect, for not incorporating SASL, could be from just not understanding how to incorporate the signs, or the fear of using signs and performing them incorrectly, or feeling extremely uncomfortable using such intricate handwork. As the movements became more refined and set, I gave the performers specific signs to insert. For example, as Lascelles signed POWERFUL (<https://youtu.be/PzmMrsXG7FI>), Caleb would sign STRONG (https://youtu.be/HN_tDT-zmD8). At the beginning of the sequence, Lascelles had to sign DANGEROUS (<https://youtu.be/yvzcDvw3EpQ>) ENERGY* (<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/BSL/physics/energy.html>) while Caleb signed EMERGE* (<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/BSL/physics/emerge.html>). Unlike most parts in the play, the two encounter scenes of the Supernova and Cleo had the least number of signs.

These sequences stood out among the rest of the performance, because of the lack of signing and the highly physical nature of the scene. The movements in the scene were created and choreographed out of contact improvisation, and took on an air of danger and confrontation. Compared to the rest of the performance, the scenes could feel slightly odd. It seemed as if the sequences were plucked out of another play and inserted into the performance. Although, the break in signing grouped the two fight scenes between Lascelles and Caleb together well. They stood out as scenes with specific stakes and two extremely powerful forces coming at odds with each other.

2.3.5.1.1 Creating the Supernova

At the beginning of forming Caleb's character, Caleb and I met alone at rehearsals. I prompted him with the vision of a dying star. Caleb explored his idea of a dying star for the first few rehearsals. He immediately took to improvising on the floor. I gave Caleb some SASL vocabulary: HOT, WARM, DIE, SUN, RED, ORANGE, YELLOW, WHITE, and let him explore with the signs. He only chose SUN and DIE – two words that indicated a dying sun. This was interesting because it immediately gave his movements a sense of weight and danger. Many of his moves, though to the floor, had an extension – grabbing out in some way. While looking at Caleb grabbing forward, his handshape looked like that of HAVE or GRAVITY. I thought, to actively use that moment as GRAVITY – Caleb would stretch out and grab and bring his hands back towards his body in GRAVITY to indicate the strong gravitational pull from the sun on the objects in space.

The first day Caleb improvised, when he took a stride or moved on the ground creating some distance, he covered a lot of ground. He easily went from one side of the room to the other. Caleb noted that he enjoyed distance and found it odd to remain in one place. Sometimes, it felt to him, that the movements were not as powerful, if they were contained to a small space.

This immense travel did not suit the idea of a Supernova to me. To me, it was the objects in space that are to move closer to the dying star (as it's continuous imploding and gravitational force pull objects closer to devour) instead of the dying star being the object to orbit and move to other planets. I wanted Caleb to work with the idea that he was the powerful force that was pulling objects towards him. To force him to travel less, I made him do the sequence again, but only allowed him to use half the room. Again, he did the sequence, but only using a $\frac{1}{4}$ of the distance of the room. Eventually, I had him remain on one spot (using a line in the floor as a reference) to cut his movement down to restricted area. After this exercise, Caleb said he was surprised how energetic and powerful the movements felt to him, doing it on one place. As a viewer, I also liked the work on one spot. It became more powerful, seeing a stillness in him. Caleb is an extremely slender and tall person, however, through the floor, it did not appear as if his body parts were stretching far into the space.

One of Caleb's personal challenges was for him to find a way for his character to remain in a single spot, un-distracting, while Cleo gave the Heartstone to the astronauts. This pivotal moment could not be overshadowed by the emergence of the Supernova. To be in place for his next cue, we had to find a way to get him on stage, without drawing attention. As a special/spotlight moved to the very middle of the stage, Caleb very slowly walked his way, in the darkness of the space, to his spot. Here, he began his movement – however, this movement was contained to him sitting on the floor and very slowly, yet heavily, creating little sways of circles.

Caleb knew before Lascelles that he, the Supernova, was to battle Cleo and in the end overpower her. I told Caleb about this because I wanted him to understand just how powerful, assertive and deadly his character could be. Before explaining to him he would have to kill

Cleo, he was very much in a space of ‘moving star in the galaxy’ as opposed to something deadly bubbling and brewing.

2.3.6 *Examples of Improvisation and Exploration Exercises*

2.3.6.1 Environment/Surface Changes and Exploring with a Finger Puppet

The first exercise was from the LAMDA ‘Mime & Improvisation’ book (Muir & Hammond, 1997: p. 15) about location focus. The exercise focuses on the performer concentrating on their physical environment, making it as realistic and descriptive as possible (using the body) to help the audience visualise the space. By giving the performers this activity, I hoped to inspire them to explore how their bodies would react to the different environments – and from viewing them, I would hopefully find interesting environments to let them incorporate into a planet. First, the performers were asked to explore the following physical environments:

1. Walking on rocks
2. A cluttered and claustrophobic area
 - a. Abigail and Malaika had lighter movements, and ‘flick movements’ – as if kicking a pile of papers on the floor to make space, or boxes with bits and pieces in. They moved relatively quickly through their space, and batted smaller objects out of the way.
 - b. Jenna, however, had a slower and heavier movement, with her body sliding. It looked as if she were trying to fit through a tight hole in a rock-cave, or a slit in a glacier.
3. A tropical paradise
4. Hot, dry, arid

- a. During this exercise, Malaika and Abigail looked as if they immediately assumed their surrounding had no water source. However, after a while, Jenna attempted to cool herself by drinking from the lake she had visualised during the tropical paradise. After seeing this, I gave the impulse that any possible water site was quickly diminishing, till there was nothing left. This caused a dramatic shift in Jenna's body and response, as she quickly became desperate and grasped at any last hope of water.

5. Light rain

6. 'And now it's falling harder' (my intention of it being a heavier downpour)

7. Shelter

- a. While discussing the exercise, Jenna raised the point of imagining the light rain, but not making the connection of my original intention of it having to start raining harder – instead, she viewed the substance as something other than rain. She was not sure what the substance was, but she could imagine it being bigger and denser, as 'it' fell on her. She enjoyed the feeling of moving from something pleasant and light touching her, to something more threatening falling on her, to finding a place of safety.

The performers' reactions to the 'cluttered and claustrophobic area' and the 'hot, dry, arid' environment influenced Planet X. The performers moved very differently in these conditions; however, they would make a good combination. The idea of the cave³⁸ was influenced by Jenna's approach to moving through a confined space. The astronauts very quickly tackled this challenge, and quite successfully.

³⁸ See the 'Developing of Planet X' section under 'Further Breakdown of Character and Scene Development' for further explanation of the cave.

From the auditions, Jenna, Malaika and Abigail seemed to work well together and gravitate towards each other's styles. There was a clear friendship bond amongst them. This prompted me to think about ways to have them work together. After finding three astronaut finger puppets, I decided to play around with them as a trio.

Each performer was given a finger puppet of a spaceman. They were given some time to acquaint themselves with their puppet, as the puppet was a new object to them and unfamiliar to the performers. They were then tasked to try to make the puppet explore the environmental changes. Unlike the first time they did the exercise, I asked them to try to separate themselves from the puppet, and to show that the puppet is the one experiencing the changes. They explored:

1. An airconditioned room
2. A damp, wet, humid area
 - a. All the performers took on a slow, heavy movement for this exploration.
3. A crowded place
4. A crowd of children
5. A gravity-less space
 - a. This was specifically important for Abigail, Malaika and Jenna, as they would be the humans, or the outsiders/strangers in space.
6. A sticky sphere

Thereafter, Jenna kept her finger puppet, while Malaika and Abigail had to leave theirs. They were then all asked to explore Jenna's puppet – three people concentrating on making one finger puppet the focus.

These exercises allowed Malaika, Jenna and Abigail to get more comfortable with moving, but at the same time moving with a puppet on-finger. They also allow the performers to experiment different environments, but this time controlling a puppet.

One obstacle the group faced was the ability to find a happy medium in their facial expressions. At times, their faces were so expressive, that the focus shifted to all the performers, and the finger puppet was overshadowed. However, many times the opposite happened when the performers became so devoid of emotional expression, that the puppets seemed lifeless. Because the puppet had to be the main focus, the performers themselves had to take a step out of the spotlight and find ways to bring focus to the puppets. One of the methods they attempted, was to constantly keep their eyes on the puppet – except when the puppet was looking into the distance, then their eyes would follow. To a degree, this was a successful strategy.

2.3.6.2 Blind Leads

Abigail, Malaika, Jenna, Lindi and Lascelles were present at this rehearsal. This was the first rehearsal Lindi and Lascelles joined. With the two new bodies in the space, I first wanted everyone to become more comfortable with each other. For this, I started with an adaptation of an exercise from ‘The Frantic Assembly book of devising theatre’ (Graham & Hoggett, 2009: pp. 106–107).

The performers began by leading each other around the room – one person in front, being led, with their eyes closed and the second person doing the leading, using the palm of their hand on the other person’s neck. This is a variant of a blind lead, where the person doing the leading is expected to take their partner on a journey through the space and to build trust between the pairs. As this exercise is taught in the Movement classes from first year, all the performers were somewhat familiar with the exercise. In the rehearsal, at first, there were three people with their eyes open, and two with their eyes closed. When I clicked my fingers, the leaders had to swap who they were leading (or if there was not someone to lead, they stepped aside). Over time, succeeded by each other, the changes became faster. Then, the roles switched: three people being led with eyes closed, and two leading with eyes open. The

same rules applied, with clapping. This time, one of the leaders had to guide two people at a time. Next, the group chose two new leaders. However, I took them aside and gave them rules to adhere to: they were not allowed to lead a person for longer than six seconds. The last game for this exercise, the group once again chose new leaders, but this time the leaders were not allowed to lead someone for longer than eight seconds, and during a swap one of the performers, with their eyes closed, had to be on the floor (anything below a standing position).

By doing this exercise, the performers were being exposed to their fellow cast member's energies and touch. They were able to experiment and discover how the various performers lead and how they reacted to others' touch. This activity also exercised the cast's trust with each other. The performers with their eyes closed, had to have faith that their leading partner was watching out for them in the space. This was easier said than done, because for most people it is difficult to fully rely on someone else for their own safety. There were moments when the pairs almost walked into each other, however, the leaders were always able to guide their partner away safely. The performers with their eyes closed, also had to become aware of the movement in the room, even though they could not see. They had to use their ears as an extension of their touch sense.³⁹ This helped the group to become more aware of each other and to connect on a higher level.

2.3.6.3 Survival Game - Inspiration for Exploring the Planets

To encourage the performers to interact with each other and to find solutions within the group, I gave them the LAMDA Survival game (Muir & Hammond, 1997: p. 39). Caleb volunteered to first stand out.

³⁹ In this case, becoming aware of an object within their nearby vicinity, but not physically seeing, smelling or touching it; a sensation of a nearby body.

Abigail, Jenna, Lindi and Malaika began each in a corner of the room, pretending to be stranded on an island beach front. After looking at their surroundings, they paired up and helped each other search for supplies. After a few minutes, the two pairs came together and formed a small group. Together they had to divide the tasks between each other. Caleb slowly, unnoticed by the group, walked around the edges of the room, watching the group. After a few moments, and a prompt, the group became aware of the presence of an ‘unknown’. The group huddled, while Caleb continued to watch. Eventually, Lindi broke away from the group to explore. Lindi and Caleb eventually found each other and interacted – an unknown inhabitant on the island, and a lost unknown. Between the two, there was a long moment of exploring, and trying to decide whether the other was friend or foe. While this took place, Abigail, Malaika and Jenna were trying to establish what have happened to Lindi - did something happened to her, and should one of them venture out to find her? Eventually, Lindi and Caleb began understanding each other and came to an agreement with one another. Lindi introduced Caleb to the group, and he in turn gave them the supplies they were lacking.

This exercised sparked the performer’s imagination. The performers had to imagine, without any physical help of set or props, a very different world around them. The idea of becoming stranded on a deserted desert island related to the idea of being stranded on a strange planet. The exercise allowed the performers to form their own story – having prompts by me – and develop characters. Them having to find solutions to their problems, helped prepare them to have to find solutions to the problems that would potentially arise on the planets.

This exercise allowed everyone the opportunity to experience what it would be like exploring a new place: how to look, where to look, what to look for. This exercise paved the way for the astronauts’ exploration of the three planets they were to land on. The astronauts and planet-performers (and Cleo) would have to find ways to interact with each other. Lindi

also commented that she liked the idea of becoming friends with an unknown creature. They noted that for a relation between the characters to form, there had to be a lot of work put in. When strangers meet, there is much uncertainty and hesitation. However, once the parties have found a common language and understanding, the relationship can grow.

2.3.6.4 Shoulder Lift and Trust

Though earlier in rehearsals the idea of lifting Abigail onto someone's shoulders was discussed and attempted, during this rehearsal the idea was further explored. Abigail, Caleb, Jenna, Lindi and Malaika were at this rehearsal.

Having someone standing on another performer's shoulder was one of my initial ideas. It came from seeing a video posted on Facebook by an aerobatics performance troupe. Malaika and Abigail had the shortest and smallest body frames, and they became the two performers who I thought would be easily lifted by the other cast members. It is mostly common, and easiest, for the smaller person to be being picked up, or do the standing/moving on someone else. When offering the idea of putting someone onto someone else's shoulder, Abigail was nominated to be lifted. Abigail's body language was much more open to attempting the lift than Malaika's. I noticed Malaika became very quiet, and quite stiff. She only began relaxing when the cast was actively attempting to lift Abigail. Abigail mentions in her journal:

"Sometimes it sucks being the small person, because people always want to do crazy thing with you. [...] Before I knew, I was on Lindi's shoulders. Don't get me wrong, it was fun, eventually, once I become slightly more comfortable and figured out how to centre myself and not tense so much."

Personally, I do not enjoy being off the ground and being lifted, so I do understand it is a very difficult and intimidating things to ask someone to try. However, Abigail fared very, very well. After much practice and testing, and feedback from lifters and those to be lifted, it

became a successful movement: everyone actively suggested solutions and looked out for Abigail. The most important part was to keep Abigail safe and supported – how that was achieved, differed greatly depending on whose shoulders she was and who was lifting where.

Up to this rehearsal, Abigail had practiced getting onto Malaika and Lindi's shoulders, and had done so next to a wall (for extra support). Malaika, although able to hold Abigail, experienced quite a bit of discomfort when Abigail was on her shoulders. Lindi, was able to balance Abigail better – having slightly broader and stronger shoulder muscles to protect herself. On this rehearsal, just to explore, Jenna offered to try to take Abigail's weight. Jenna seemed relatively comfortable and was able to find a strong base for herself. However, Abigail found it difficult to get up on Jenna's shoulders, unlike Malaika and Lindi, because Jenna was much taller. Abigail had to work out a suitable way for herself to get onto Jenna's shoulders. To get down again, she required the help of the taller people. She would push her hands down on someone's hands to steady herself, and a second person would help lower her on their shoulders and then to the floor. This proved to be problematic and, in the end, Abigail rather stood on the shorter Lindi's shoulders. Lascelles and Caleb helped by pushing her feet up onto Lindi's shoulders. To get down, Jenna grabbed Abigail's hands and Malaika caught her.

To be able to successfully lift Abigail, the cast decided it would be easier to have Abigail sit on Lindi's shoulders (Lindi being on all fours on the floor) and once Lindi was in an upright standing position, the two supporters (being Lascelles and Caleb) would take Abigail's feet with both their hands and lift her up onto Lindi's shoulders while Abigail gained her balance. This took much practice but was found to be the safest way. At times it was difficult to practice this move, because when in a rehearsal room, the lights and lower sections of a 'ceiling-wall' (protruding sections of walls hanging down from the ceiling) would get in the way, so that Abigail could not stand up straight on Lindi's shoulders – her

movement would be stunted by the ceiling-wall, or she would hit her head on the lights. When the cast did practice this move, they had to discuss and move themselves into a position where Abigail could stand – I think this balancing and moving at the same time forced the performers to find the safest means of moving (with a hunched back Abigail on Lindi's shoulders) and made them hyperaware of hearing and feeling what the performers around them were communicating to them with speech and body.

This was perceived by me and many of the performers as one of the most difficult moves/stunts in the performance. It required a lot of rehearsing, however when we were able to insert it into the scene, it flowed very well. We decided it would fit into Planet X very well. Jenna and Abigail would look at a rock-plant hybrid formation (Lascelles, Lindi, Caleb) for the Heartstone. Jenna, only finding c-u (copper), would start walking away, and Abigail would sit down on the rock-plant hybrid. Abigail would be able to sit down on the planet performers, and suddenly be lifted to the air. The other astronauts would run to Abigail and appear as if they were trying to help her down (but in reality, help her stand up on Lindi's shoulders). Suddenly the performers would all shake from an earthquake and Jenna and Malaika would grab Abigail safely off Lindi's shoulders and help her to the ground. Malaika, thinking it was Abigail's fault for the earthquake and for not concentrating, would then sternly tell her INDEX1 ASTRONAUT BAD (<https://youtu.be/cSUVFMvddrI>).

Physical Theatre should, in some way, challenge the mind and body. Finding alternative ways of standing up on someone's shoulders, then getting down, is indeed a challenging affair: whether it is acrobatic in nature or as simple as sitting on someone's back/shoulders. When there is a real risk of injury, a group must find ways to execute the move as safely as possible. The process of achieving the lift itself is a test of concentration and trust within an ensemble. By describing how this lift came to be, it is also describing the

process of bonding between the cast members, and the physical difficulties that the cast faced.

2.3.6.5 Laban Technique

One of the tools used during our Physical Theatre process was Laban's Movement Analysis. This extremely popular movement exercise is used to familiarise performers with movements they did not consciously consider viable options for characterisation, and worthy of experimentation. First the performer had to familiarize themselves with several basic movements which Rudolf von Laban grouped. These basic movements: Dab, Flick, Float, Glide, Press, Punch, Slash and Wring (Yonts, n.d.: p. 2) are defined using the following four parameters: space/focus (direct or indirect), time (quick or sustained), weight (light or heavy) and flow (bound or free) (Newlove, 2016: p. 17). The performers must apply each of these words individually to selected body parts and must explore the possibilities. For example, using the word Gliding and containing it to the hands, hips and knees. Punching could be explored in the elbows, nose and hips. Once the performers had time to explore the words with individual body parts, they then move on to a scenario. They then used the entire body to convey the movement's characteristics.

The following table incorporates examples from Muir and Hammond (1997: pp. 28-29), Somerset Factory Group (n.d.: p. 4) and Yontz (n.d.: p. 2) which I used in the rehearsal. I asked the performers to think and explore the differences between the contrasting effort elements while exploring the movement.

<i>Laban Action</i>	Effort Elements	Movement Example
<i>Dab</i>	Direct (s)	Touching a hot stove
	Light (w)	Cleaning your mouth

	Quick (t)	
	Bound (f)	
<i>Flick</i>	Indirect (s)	Touching a hot stove
	Light (w)	Dusting off lint from clothes
	Quick (t)	Throwing a Frisbee
	Free (f)	Getting rid of a bug on your arm
<i>Float</i>	Indirect (s)	an astronaut in space
	Light (w)	sitting on a cloud
	Sustained (t)	spraying air freshener
	Free (f)	using a bubble wand
<i>Glide</i>	Direct (s)	Spreading butter on toast
	Light (w)	Erasing a blackboard
	Sustained (t)	Ice skating on a lake
	Free (f)	
<i>Press</i>	Direct (s)	Pushing a child on a swing
	Heavy (w)	Pressing a soda machine button
	Sustained (t)	Ironing a shirt
	Bound (f)	Moulding clay
<i>Punch</i>	Direct (s)	A karate kumite
	Heavy (w)	Boxing match
	Quick (t)	Plumping a pillow
	Bound (f)	Applauding loudly
<i>Slash</i>	Indirect (s)	Cutting through undergrowth
	Heavy (w)	Casting a fishing line
	Quick (t)	Playing golf

	Free (f)	Sword fighting a dummy
<i>Wring</i>	Indirect (s)	Wringing a beach towel
	Heavy (w)	Twisting off a bottle cap
	Sustained (t)	
	Bound (f)	

Table 2. 4

After the group completed the exercise, we discussed their thoughts on it. Below is the dialogue that followed⁴⁰:

Jamie: “What big distinctions do you find? Did you find certain ones more difficult, or easier to handle? Do you prefer some of them?”

Lindi: “Some are, like, very erratic – like, it has one main movement and then others are like, suspended in air. And some have like rhythm that you get into after a while, like the dabbing.”

Malaika: “Uhm, something like punching or sparring takes your whole body because to follow a move, a punch, your body turns to give it that extra power. But something like opening a bottle just takes your hand and your arm, or like sometimes your back muscle. If it’s like, if it’s like seriously hard to open. But like it’s not as much as what a punch and a kick would.”

Abigail: “Ja, so the focus point of the body shifts. So, you feel where the shift is in the body, depending on what you do. Like for instance, floating wouldn’t necessarily feel your arms are heavy, so to try to create that is difficult. Uhm, but you get that sense of lightness

⁴⁰ This dialogue has been transcribed from a video recording that was made during the rehearsal. I have translated the Afrikaans to English. I have included the relevant information in the dialogue, choosing to exclude irrelevant comments (such as jokes and side comments).

almost. It's almost like, I want to say, like, there's just like, there's movement or something. And then your play with that. It's different compared to gliding, where I think of straight lines. So, I for instance, when I think of gliding, then I think of its... it's something... not necessarily straight, but a follow-though."

Jamie: "Do you find any movement of these movements or characteristics of these movements relative to some of the characters that we're looking at?"

Abigail: "Floating. Astronauts. Easiest one." (Malaika and Jenna nod in agreement)

Lascelles: "Gliding. When you said gliding on the ice. I found it, in the seasons. Yeah, the gliding on ice is very to her character – that's sense of playfulness, the way that her body can sway in motion as she goes through everything."

Jamie: "And the wringing one as well, with the idea of you growing around yourself now, perhaps?"

Lascelles: "Oh, yes, yes."

Jamie: "You seemed to explore quite a few different wringing things."

Lascelles: "Yes, yes. I did explore a lot of wringing things."

Abigail: "Pressing could also work for the astronauts. Like, if we're pressing on something. Just 'cause we're in a spaceship, and we're bound to press a button. On the space suit. Little things."

Lindi: "Well, uhm, the Moon thing... is very playful and erratic and this (shows punching movements) so I think that the punching and stuff. Maybe to explore that. Even the flicking as well. And what's this one again?" (shows slashing moments)

Group: "Slashing!"

Lindi: "Ja! That one as well."

Jamie: “Your flick and punching – your punch is much heavier than your flick. So you have two very different movements.”

Lindi: “I think it’s directness that binds the two.”

Jamie: “Is there one you didn’t like, or found difficult, or just found ugh?”

Lindi: “The wringing was very nice. Because it was like, if you wring your arm, it’s like giving yourself a hug. It was so nice.”

Lascelles: “I don’t like this (wrigs with her hands, as if wringing out a towel). It reminds me of wringing a towel. I don’t like the feeling of it.”

Lascelles’s initial reaction to the wringing movement was of displeasure. However, Lascelles later went on to incorporate glide and wringing motions to her character’s (Cleo) movement. She realised that the wringing motions were driving her vine-like movements. The astronauts often incorporated floating movements in their exploration of the astronauts in space. I again gave a shortened exercise of the principal movements to Lascelles and Caleb (as Caleb was not at the rehearsal where we spent lots of time on the exercise). Caleb focused on a punching and slashing movement for his Supernova. Even though most of the time the performers did not consciously think “I am exploring with a Wring movement” or “This movement is a Flick movement”, the exercise helped the performers connect to different forces and options of physical movements that they could achieve.

2.4 Further Breakdown of Characters and Scene Development

2.4.1 Take-Off and Landing Sequence

During the conceptual stages of the performance, I researched various modes of transport as I knew the astronauts would have to be launched into space in one way or another. I explored

the idea of a hot air balloon, the old space shuttle with booster rockets, Elon Musk's *SpaceX*'s⁴¹ space vehicle that is powered by reusable booster rockets that return to earth automatically, and finally Richard Branson's *Virgin Galactic*'s⁴² spacecraft which makes use of a carrier aircraft (to carry the spacecraft to a desirable height from where it fires its own engines to exit Earth's atmosphere).

I have a keen interest in aviation. When researching Branson's spacecraft, I was immediately drawn to the spacecraft/carrier aircraft concept. The carrier aircraft looks like two planes joined together by a wing-like center section. The spacecraft hangs on this center section of the mother ship, while being piggy-backed to its launching altitude: a much smarter and most cost-efficient way to get the spacecraft into space. Thus, an enormous amount of money is saved by using Aviation Gasoline for the first part of the flight, and not the extremely expensive and highly explosive rocket fuel. At height, the carrier aircraft releases the spacecraft, which then fires its own rocket motors to continue the last part of the journey.

⁴¹ My main source of references included my father, my prior knowledge from magazines/television and the *SpaceX* website (<https://www.spacex.com/>).

⁴² My main source of references included my father, my prior knowledge from magazines/television and the *Virgin Galactic* website (<https://www.virgingalactic.com/>).



Figure 2. 21

Virgin Galactic's space shuttle and carrier plane (Grossman, 2017).

While watching in amazement at trial runs of this highly sophisticated and ground-breaking launching process, the music of the guitar maestro Joe Satriani, came to mind. He plays his guitar with incredible technical abilities and produces such clean and melodic rock sounds, that it captivates you. The air- and spacecrafts used by *Virgin Galactic*, are displaying the best aerodynamic and technological design features that are available to mankind today. The new aircraft are sleek, slender and have streamlined shapes. Listening to Satriani's music reminds me of the sleek and slender geometrical lines of the aircraft. His music was therefore an obvious choice to me for the parts of the play where the carrier aircraft was present. I chose certain instrumental tracks to set the atmosphere for the introduction and ending of the play. Combining the use of aircraft, spacecraft and the sound of Satriani, I had the ingredients to inspire my performers to imagine and create Branson's engineering marvel.

The show was to be without any verbal dialogue, but I decided that some voiceover sound effects during the take-off and landing sequence in the theatre foyer, would create an atmosphere of adventure and travel. It would also serve as an indicator of the theme of the

play. To make the audience feel like they were part of the journey I wanted them to move in and experience the performance space. I decided that the opening and ending scenes should take place in the foyer (acting as ‘Earth’) while the bulk of the performance (representing ‘Space’). would be in the Lab theatre. The audience had to walk from the foyer, up the stairs (which were decorated with fairy-lights) to the Lab. Although the story plays out on fictional planets, I wanted to have the take-off and landing as accurate as possible.

My father works in the aviation industry and is familiar with the procedures and protocols followed. He provided me with a draft copy of the launch, exit, re-entry and landing radio communications procedures. I typed out an edited version, which was again changed slightly by him. For the take-off dialogue, we used four characters: the air traffic controller, the Mission Control correspondent, the pilot of the carrier aircraft and, finally, the commander of the spacecraft. Because the carrier aircraft is not needed for landing, the landing dialogue only had three characters: again, the air traffic controller, the Mission Control correspondent and the commander of the spacecraft.

I had closed auditions for the voiceovers, because exams had started, and it was difficult to arrange for people to come in. Fortunately, I had a good idea of who I wanted, as I had worked with two of them in the past and often spoke to another one and knew what their voices sounded like. The actors I asked to audition were instructed to read a generic air traffic control dialogue, and to send me (or Marloise) a voicenote over WhatsApp. *Kennedy Tower* (air traffic controller) was voiced by third year Jeandré Spies. *Mission Control* was voiced by third year Wyatt Afrika. *Red Sparrow* (the carrier aircraft pilot) was voiced by second year Ansel Burger and *Star cruiser* (the commander of the spacecraft) was voiced by my performer, Malaika.

Nicolaas Joubert, my Assistant Stage Manager and Sound Technician, and I then arranged with the performers to record the dialogue. The recording session was about an hour

long, and we were able to record three takes of each dialogue, including individual sentences from the performers, so that we had a variety of options to choose from. Nicolaas proceeded to put a filter over the recording to give it a more radio-like sound. The take-off dialogue was then layered over Satriani's 'Always with Me, Always with You' track, while the landing dialogue was layered over 'Rubina's Blue Sky Happiness'.

The performers had limited time to rehearse their take-off and landing scene in the theatre's foyer as the theatre is often hired out and we could not disturb those using the theatre. The complete dialogue was only incorporated on the final few days of rehearsal. We had been focusing more on the body of the play, than the introduction and denouement⁴³. As these scenes were relatively short, and the final scene only consisted of Malaika and Abigail, we decided we could create a decent scene in less time than, for example, the 15-minute Planet X scene. Though the performers had been ad-libbing⁴⁴, no wording and signing was set. This did not seem to concern the performers as there were only a few lines to speak. The newly added SASL to this scene was slightly unnerving for the astronauts – suddenly they had to speak and sign at the same time. We ran through the sequence several times so that they could get accustomed to the change from only signing/moving. There is a different degree of concentration needed to be able to sign and speak at the same time, especially if it is not something you have done your whole life, or had quite a bit of practice in. The more the astronauts rehearsed their lines and signing, the more comfortable they became and could more easily perform the spoken and signs simultaneously. During this time, the astronauts

⁴³ The *Cambridge* (online) *Dictionary* defines the denouement as “the end of a story, in which everything is explained, or the end result of a situation” (Denouement, 2019).

⁴⁴ This means the performers were spontaneously creating dialogue between themselves. They did not have to memorize lines, merely say things that would suit the scenario. The *Merriam-Webster* (online) *Dictionary* defines ad-lib as: “to deliver spontaneously” and “to improvise especially lines or a speech” (Ad-Lib, 2019).

also received new titles: ‘Captain Malaika’, ‘Pilot Jenna’ and ‘Cadet Abby’ suddenly did not sound correct in the context. I researched (Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, 2019) various space missions and the crew that was present, and decided that ‘Commander Malaika’, ‘Command Pilot Jenna’ and ‘Flight Engineer Abby’ should replace the previous titles.

As the performance was moving (foyer to Lab to foyer) we had to find a way to move the audience from venue to venue. While the astronaut’s actions could have hinted to the audience to follow them (Malaika up the stairs, and then at the end to follow Abigail and Malaika down again, there was no guarantee that the audience would: 1. give enough room for the performance to occur, and 2. Actually follow the performers on cue. After toying around with ideas of having a cast member explicitly gesture to follow them, and a possibility of a sort of sound cue, some crew members made a clever suggestion to use a crew member-dressed in a florescent jacket and with luminous sticks – to show the audience where they should move. Eduan van Niekerk (Technical Assistant) became the crew member to take on the role of the aircraft marshaller⁴⁵. This role came with the difficulty of having to directly interact with audience members, lead them and ultimately control the audience. Eduan’s role began with him leading the astronauts into the foyer, while walking through any audience members who may have been in the way of the astronauts’ acting space and showing where to move. As the astronauts and the carrier plane took off, Eduan had to once again clear a line

⁴⁵ Aviation Central (2018) describes an aircraft marshaller as “A person trained to direct by visual or other means the movement of aircraft on the ground, into and out of landing, parking or hovering points. Also called aircraft guide. Marshalling is one-on-one visual communication and a part of aircraft ground handling. It may be as an alternative to, or additional to, radio communications between the aircraft and air traffic control. The usual equipment of a marshaller is a reflecting safety vest, a helmet with acoustic earmuffs, and gloves or marshalling wands—handheld illuminated beacons”.

in the foyer for the performers to make their way though. He waited at the bottom of the steps to hold off audience members from climbing the steps before Malaika could safely make her way up. He then showed the audience to walk up the stairs. After he had ushered the last people in, he then made his way to the on-stage backstage area where he would assist the performers with props during the show. At the end of the show when Malaika and Abigail flew past the Moon, back to Earth, Eduan followed the astronauts, again as an aircraft marshaller. He indicated to the audience to follow him out of the theatre. When the astronauts were a few steps down the staircase, he stopped the audience and maintained some space between them and the astronauts. After the ending scene, Eduan would show the audience they could exit downstairs. Interacting on this level with an audience is quite difficult, as audiences differ from evening to evening. During my performance in *Unfettered*, I needed to learn on the job that a performer must be firm with the audience if their movement through spaces influences the performance. During *Unfettered* audience members were given a small glass of juice and a mini cupcake – one reason for this was to give a few moments extra to the actors to prepare themselves for the new venue (as some had to put on masks and arrange some props before they could start the next scene). One evening, there were audience members who merely took a cupcake and rushed to the next room – not leaving any time to set up. I originally stood aside at the door, offering my hands to hold papers/glasses. I was not in a position to stop the audience from pushing though. The next evening, I stood right in the doorway. It was only after someone put a cup or paper in my hand, that I would move to one side and let them pass. This was a successful change in the time management and I could also buy my fellow performers some extra time to set up. From this, I learnt that in guiding and managing an audience, one sometimes needs to be assertive. This knowledge and skill is best learnt through firsthand experience with a live audience. Therefore, Eduan, being the aircraft marshaller, had authority over the audience – it was his job to keep the runway clear and to

warn off someone if they were in the way. I realized the first night would probably be an ‘unsuccessful’ night regarding audience management, but it was a necessary action. I offered Eduan lines such as “Please clear the runway”, and “Ma’am/Sir, I need you to step back”. The next two nights were managed much, much better and I feel Eduan became a lot more confident in himself and his authority over the audience.

2.4.2 *Developing of Planet X*

Planet X was one of the last sequences to be added to the performance. This sequence was originally meant to revolve around installing a satellite, and having the performers perform a sequence with various parts of a satellite – the dish would have been an old one I donated, with the box and solar panels being built by my technical team. However, the quotes for materials the technical team wanted to use was more than half our budget. I was not willing to spend so much on a single prop, and instead opted to incorporate another planet.

We already had Planet Slinky (a fun, upbeat planet) and the luscious Planet Heartstone (which had a floral summer and an icy winter). I wanted a contrasting planet, and asked Jenna to create a collage from which the performers could draw influence. I used words like ‘arid’ and ‘dry’ to prompt her collage, as I thought something desert-like would work well.

During the first rehearsal for Planet X, Jenna bought her collage which consisted of many grainy pictures (sand, salt and seeds), acidic reds (such as tomatoes), a smoky black and white picture of buck horns and a sphere with a dark blue eye. The performers were asked to use the collage as an impulse and to explore what kind of planet would this be. After a bit, I added music as a further impulse: I use Arabic and Egyptian inspired music. The

music often included musical instruments such as neys⁴⁶, with repetitive beats that could be associated with a long journey across the desert.



Figure 2. 22

Jenna's Planet X collage.

I challenged the performers to create structures that the astronauts could go through or over. Lindi, Caleb and Lascelles were charged with creating a variety of structures that Jenna, Abigail and Malaika had to find a way over or through. After some exploration, we attempted to start a sequence against the wall of the rehearsal room and create a tunnel-like structure. Malaika was to tell the astronauts COME (<https://youtu.be/a64Cv6J9iQ0>) to follow her through the cave tunnel. I asked that only one astronaut go through a structure at a time. After

⁴⁶ “The nay (nai, nye, ney) is a simple, long, end-blown flute that is the main wind instrument of Middle Eastern music and the only wind instrument in classical Arabic music” (MidEastWeb, 2019).

an astronaut went through the structure, either Caleb or Lindi or Lascelles changed their position - only one of the tunnel performers moved at a time. In the end, there were ten set moves. As we ran the play in the rehearsal room, we decreased it to seven moves because it felt as though it was extremely repetitive, with no climax. Even after the shortening of the sequence, it felt long. After the astronauts went through the cave, the planet performers created an earthquake with their whole body and signed EARTHQUAKE. The astronauts reacted to the planet shaking, and Jenna would sign CAREFUL

(<https://youtu.be/8i6CmnVispA>) to the astronauts. Abigail wrote in her journal:

“The fun, playful rehearsals, playing around with the new planet (Planet X) I really liked the tunnel idea, and with this, we figured out where to put the standing on shoulders image. I felt like this image suited Planet X a lot better. The standing on shoulders image, was originally be worked in by the black hole scene, but since Jenna was dying and not me, Planet X was the next best spot to put this image.”

At the beginning of Planet X, Lascelles suggested that the planet performers walk on stage together and repeat the same signs three times, increasing their speed each round. Both the performers and I suggested signs that could represent the hot planet. The signs decided on, in their order, where: TERRAIN*

(<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/BSL/geography/terrain.html#start>), SOIL

(<https://youtu.be/JJlpHAYO6k>), DROUGHT*

(<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/BSL/geography/drought.html#start>), HOT

(<https://youtu.be/dyg9Unslsek>), WARM (<https://youtu.be/9GCKFAWBNwQ>) and

VOLCANO* (<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/BSL/geography/volcano.html#start>). The signs, along with their facial expressions, seemed to be transparent iconic and non-transparent iconic. Lascelles, Lindi and Caleb, have very different ways of signing to each other and it was difficult to get them all to sign in an identical way. Lindi naturally tended to put her shoulders and torso into the signing, Lascelles naturally extended her signs far into the

signing space. Caleb on the other hand drew out a sign and when it came to a transition movement, the movement was snappier. For a couple of rehearsals they tried to produce the signs in a similar manner: for example, the sign DROUGHT*. Sometimes, when they moved their hands away from their throats, one would pull the hand away in a claw while another would bring the fingers and thumb together. They all tried to pull the hand away in a claw while another time with the fingers against the thumb. There were other moments in the scene where Lascelles, Lindi and Caleb were expected to produce more signs in the same way (LIVE (<https://youtu.be/cH91agt-tAI>), HERE). However, the unison was lacking. After the suggestion from my supervisor, Professor Petrus Du Preez⁴⁷, we discarded the idea of performing the signs in the same way and instead allowed the performance to sign at their own speed, time and manner, as long as they were using the correct sign.

This planet was different to the others in the sense that the occurrences on the planet did not lead to a climax. It was rather a repetitiveness of movements to indicate the landscape. This set the planet apart from the others and allowed for creating a feeling of repetition and futility.

2.4.3 *Developing of Planet Slinky*

Planet Slinky is probably the sequence that was developed over the longest time. During the first week, the development of Planet Slinky began with Lindi. I happened to come across a slinky, which gave me the idea to build a planet motivated by slinkies. While I was in conversation with Lascelles about her attraction to Uranus and Pluto, Lindi was tasked with

⁴⁷ Professor Petrus Du Preez is the current post graduate programme co-ordinator at the *Stellenbosch University Drama* Department. He is a lecturer of Theatre Studies and Puppetry. He obtained his MA (Drama) in 2003 from *Stellenbosch University*, with the submission of his thesis: *Die Slagveld van Teks en Betekenis: Enkele Aspekte in die Dramatiek van Breyten Breytenbach*, and in 2007 his DPhil (Drama) with: *Icoon en Medium: Die Toneelpop, Masker en Akteurmanipuleerder in Afrika-Performances*.

exploring with a slinky: she was asked to identify the various movements that a slinky was capable of making, and to find ways to imitate that with her body. I had no initial preference to what would happen on the planet: whether it was uninhabited or inhabited, full of flora or not, whether there were any kinds of creatures on the planet or not – the exercise was merely to see the slinky movements interpreted. Lindi spent a couple of minutes on her own, and when she was ready, she showed me three ideas: this was definitely a pivotal moment because Lindi's movements highly influenced my approach to developing the planet further. Each movement that Lindi presented to me became living-like, or animal-like. The moves all had distance in their movement – in other words, the body kept extending from the movement origin. In the end, one of her moves from this session was incorporated into the final Slinky Planet sequence: she curled up into a ball (on her back) and when someone touched her, she would let out a 'eek', uncurl and give a roll away from her curled up position to get away from whatever touched her.

Unfortunately, I was not able to attend one evening rehearsal. However, I tasked Lindi with the responsibility to recap all the existing vocabulary the cast had at that point, and also to lead the group in an exercise to explore and create new animals for Planet Slinky. I explained to her the concept: a cirque-like planet with bubbly music and the 'fun' planet. I mentioned to her that I did not want the planet to take on a heavy atmosphere, as that would come at a later stage. Lindi instructed the group to make use of the slinkies to create creatures. When discussing the exercise, the performers agreed they felt some uncertainty towards the interpretation they had of the exercise. The following dialogue occurred⁴⁸:

Malika: "It's going to be very different. It was really cool experimenting with the slinky."

⁴⁸ This dialogue has been transcribed from a video recording that was made during the rehearsal. I have included the relevant information in the dialogue, choosing to exclude irrelevant comments (such as jokes and side comments).

Abigail: “It was weird because I wasn’t sure if they (the performer) were something, and the slinky was part of them, or if it was the slinky that was the creature or if they were the creature with the slinky and it was this they were trying to protecting. At first, I was very much like, I was trying to touch the slinky, I would try to touch the slinky. And then I started to notice that they would react. And I was like ‘Okay... are ya’ll creatures? I’m so confused’.”

Jenna: “Yeah....”

Abigail: “So, I’m still a bit confused as to what is happening though.”

Malaika: “Mmm, yeah.”

Abigail: “But I liked some of the things we came up with though. Especially like Caleb and my scene, I like how he was using it [the slinky] as a weapon to back me off, because he realised I was coming too close. And then after a while when I caught him, he was like ‘Oh’. *(rapid arm movements as if trying to break free)* But it was really cool. It’s such a creaturely thing to do, I think. It’s so like, this thing you’re protecting and you using it as your defence and then someone came to control it and you’re like “What do I do now?” and that was interesting.”

Caleb: “Yeah.”

This highlighted the uncertainty of whether the slinkies were to be used as puppets – being the creature themselves and needing a puppeteer to give them life – or for them to be useful objects to portray the idea of a creature (but not *be* it). The group naturally seemed to lean towards the latter. The performers took on the character of the creature, and the slinky became an extension of the creature.

Later, when discussing the rehearsal with Lindi, she informed me that she had the cast draw pictures of what they imagined would be on a slinky planet. I asked the cast to bring their drawings with to the next rehearsal and found that all the pictures I saw (Jenna, Malaika and Abigail) incorporated shades of bright pink, purple and orange. Many of the creatures had something twisty or bouncy about them. None of the creatures seemed aggressive or harmful.

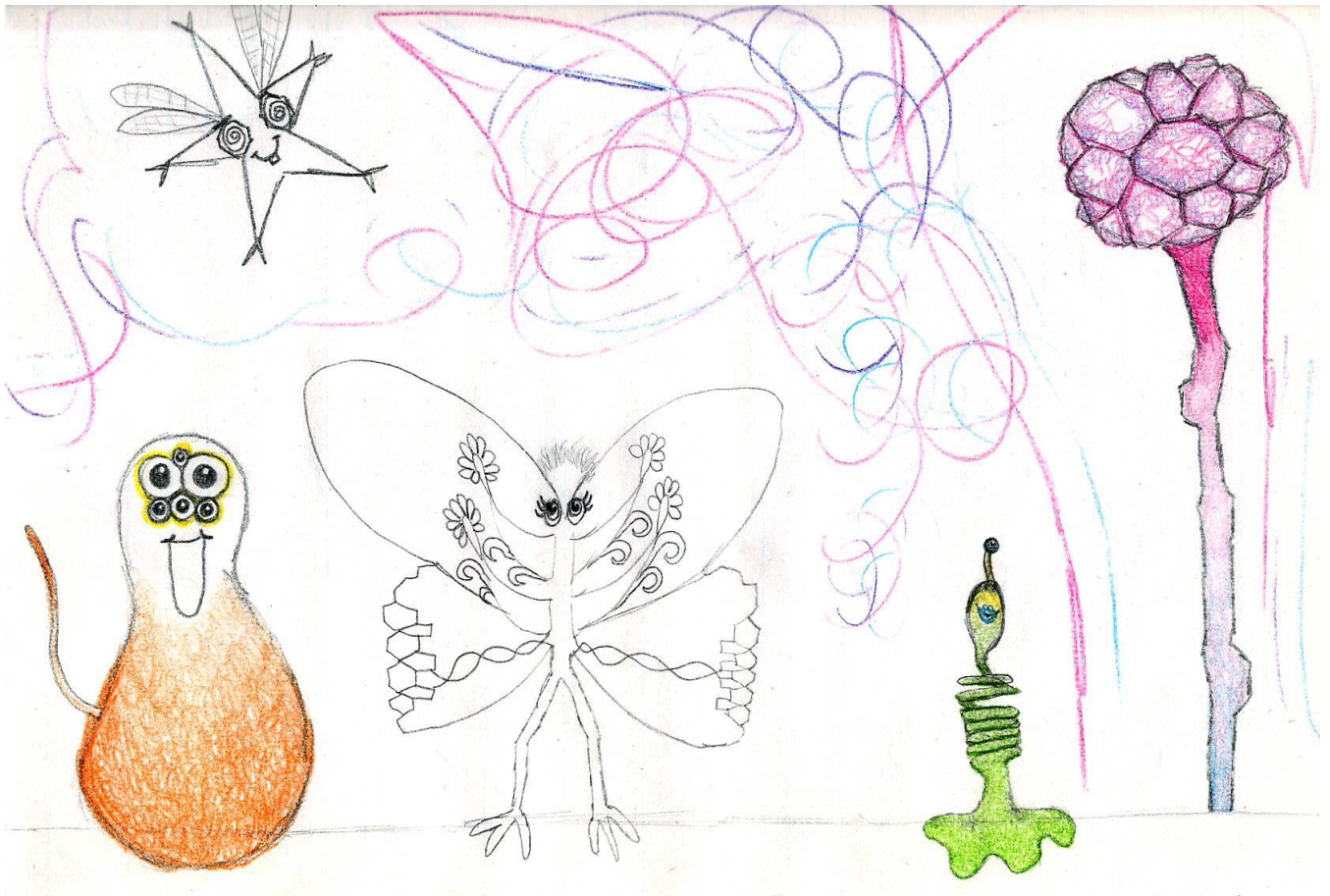


Figure 2. 23

These were the aliens Jenna initially imagined on Planet Slinky.

I decided to incorporate the pictures into the creation of further creatures and asked the cast to create something based on the pictures.

Another method used to create content for this scene was to incorporate all six performers – in this way, the astronauts could contribute to the layout of the planet. It allowed the astronaut and the ‘space’ performers to work on similar ideas. Three would have slinkies,

while the others not (merely for the sake of prop preservation). I would play music (varying from style to style), while all the performers, on their own, were asked to explore what plants could be created from the idea of a slinky. Then they were asked to find animals that in some manner resembled a slinky. Malaika commented, regarding using the slinkies to create characters:

“The slinky was either an extension of what I was trying to create, or it was the slinky itself that expressed or gave an idea to the plant or animal. I got carried away and lost the plot for animal or plant, same with Caleb. It became more alienistic [sic] than realistically earthy. Which ended up working out perfectly, since the planet is not earth but made up of our childish imagination.”

While the cast was exploring, I observed, watching for movements that could be used for the planet. After a while, I would ask the performer who came up with an idea to show the rest of the group, and then I would select some (or all) of the group to attempt to imitate the action. There were also moments when I offered an alternative for a move. For example, when focusing on animals, Malaika created a creature which (on knees and elbows) moved backwards, with head downwards. The knees and elbows were the points touching the ground, and the backwards movement as created by lengthening one leg at a time, then pulling back onto the knees. Because Malaika's hands were free, just resting in front of her, I suggested she create TORTOISE (<https://youtu.be/KdvDIsttZtM>) with her hands. This became known as the Backwards Turtle. Another example, once again when creating animals, was a move Lascelles created: starting on her knees, she lifted her hands (flat palms facing outwards) to her face and suddenly she fell/bobbed forwards and pulled her arms straight along her sides and used her pelvis and stomach area to create waves with her body – like a worm moving forward. Instead of flat palms, I asked her to use the sign for SNAKE (a bent v-hand) (<https://youtu.be/kGbYAdQ06II>) with both hands. She was still able to do the move with this change. To add to it, I asked her to incorporate COBRA – using both hands to

create a cone-like shape around the head, followed by SNAKE. The astronauts incorporated the sign FUNNY and CUTE (<https://youtu.be/mYtREs5yhs4>) when discussing the animals with each other.

After a couple of weeks of playing around with the idea of plants and animals, I found a number of moves I thought could create an interesting sequence. On my own, I wrote down a potential sequence of events which I wanted to happen. Below is the sequence:

- 1.1. Astronauts see unknown planet #2 - lighting: blue/neon
- 1.2. Start: Li, C, La = plants in the terrain (quiet, just doing their thing)
- 1.3. Then: M, A, J = come out, pointing to planet, land on the planet
 - 1.3.1. Engines off, buttons, helmets ON, get out → cautiously look at where they've landed (J maybe stay in shuttle first, looking around)
- 1.4. Look at colours and oddly shaped rocks/trees: TREES, TERRAIN, BLUE LIGHT, BRIGHT, PINK, GREEN (twirl)
- 1.5. Jenna jumps out, goes to look for A and M --? Follow them, then sneaky out
- 1.6. Sees the 3 **defence** plants – touches one, it eeks and moves away
 - 1.6.1. A and M hear, run over to her – see her playing with plants
 - 1.6.1.1. Eek – roll
 - 1.6.1.2. Eek – roll – **defence**
 - 1.6.1.2.1. They all back off (get together)
- 1.7. Ca-la-li all quickly roll off
- 1.8. Je-m-a look at them confused
- 1.9. **Snail** and **cartwheel**
 - 1.9.1. Li continue **snail**
 - 1.9.2. Ca-la across room as **backwards turtle (TURTLE)**

- 1.10. Ca-la-li form the '**waggelpak**'⁴⁹ and follow Je-m-a around
- 1.11. Find way for Ca-la-li to get the balloons → x3 → and grab off helmets (run to spaceship)
 - 1.11.1. Je-m-a scream/worry about breathing
 - 1.11.2. Ca-la-li give balloons to breathe
- 1.12. Ca-la-li all do **bum tail**
 - 1.12.1. Je-m-a start to imitate so that all are jumping around
- 1.13. Ca-la-li get together (Jenna's weird **butterfly bird** thing) to the centre for the Giant Slinky King
- 1.14. Worship for it to come down
 - 1.14.1. It emerges
 - 1.14.2. Play somehow
 - 1.14.3. Let Giant Slinky King fall
- 1.15. Ca-la and M (end) hold it and set it up neatly
 - 1.15.1. Li goes though first to show others they can join
 - 1.15.1.1. Abby first
 - 1.15.1.2. Jenna
 - 1.15.1.3. Caleb
 - 1.15.1.4. Malaika
 - 1.15.1.5. Lascelles
 - 1.15.2. Each time someone goes though, someone takes over to hold, and the tunnel changes shape
- 1.16. Eventually everyone is holding it, pick up and dragon-dragon with it

⁴⁹ *Waggelpak* was an Afrikaans word we used to describe the group of animals: *waggel* (waddle) and *pak* (pack, as in a pack of wolves).

- 1.17. Li go tough it again, but gather it all up, play with it
- 1.18. Ca-la go off and get balls
- 1.19. Run back on and start playing with a single ball → Jenna's move (clap hands, wobble) – **seal (SEAL)**
- 1.20. Li **snail**, Ca-la fall into **cobra worm (COBRA, SNAKE)**
 - 1.20.1. Jenna runs to grab her → “picking up a small slinky” (which becomes Lindi) and hides it in her suit → make sure M and A don't see
- 1.21. Li grabs all balls and juggles – or pops them just up and down the whole time
 - 1.21.1. Ca-la grab them one by one as they're in the air
 - 1.21.2. Ca-la-li all throw a ball up together
- 1.22. Then throw at Je-m-a (catch)
 - Throw between them
 - **lizard (LIZARD)** run to try to catch balls
 - Ca-la-li turn into **froggy** (jump over each other)
 - end with a **FROG**, that jumps all the way to the ground
 - Ca-la turn into '**padda swem**⁵⁰,
 - Everyone waves and say goodbye
 - Lindi grab balloons to give to all
 - Take off

I read the sequence out and one-by-one the performers attempted the sequence. One of the most difficult things to practice was the worshipping of Slinky King, because we could

⁵⁰ Afrikaans words used to describe the movement: *padda* (frog) and *swem* (swim).

not lower it from the roof. Instead, someone had to run in with it – which often resulted in late cues and messy actions. As the scene was rehearsed, we also took out moves. This was done to make the scene shorter, but also more manageable. For example, the backwards tortoise was removed from the sequence – there were awkward transitions to and from the movement for most performers involved. Also, instead of having a number of characters jump over each other, only Lindi in the end jumped over the other performers. All of this assisted in making the scene flow more easily.

While working with the gravity of planets (also on Planet X and Planet Heartstone), there was the conclusion that the gravity difference would mostly affect the astronauts, as any life on the planets would already be used to the gravity and climates, they live in. The planet-performers would show signs of the influence of the gravity; however, the astronauts would be much more visible in their battle to overcome the immense differences. To add clarity to the scene, for the astronauts, as to how they should see or interact with the planet, I asked Jenna to create a collage – drawing inspiration from previous pictures that the cast drew of possible animal and plant-life on the planet, as well as from the movements and discussions of the scene. The picture helped the astronauts visualize a similar planet – there was more unity in how they perceived what they saw, and how to ‘imagine’ the stage. From this, the astronauts developed a bouncy manner of walking, as the planet was deemed very rubber-like and bouncy (influenced by the slinkies and balls). Their weight was much lighter than that on Earth.



Figure 2. 24

Jenna's interpretation of the environment of Planet Slinky.

One comedic element we brought into the scene, was with the use of the sign DON'T-KNOW (https://youtu.be/qz4c5P_d_U8). The aim was to play with the idea of a sequence of responses: from Malaika to Abigail to Jenna, from Jenna to Abigail to Malaika. At the beginning of the scene, every time the plants (Lindi, Lascelles, Caleb) were touched, they made an 'eek' sound. Jenna was to touch the plants (which she was not allowed to touch, because they could have been dangerous) and quickly jump to where Malaika and Abigail were walking to conceal her action. The three astronauts would stop in their tracks, and Malaika would turn around to look at Abigail with a "What was that?/What did you do?" sceptical expression, to which Abigail would turn around to look at Jenna and ask with a curious expression "What was that?/What did you do?" Jenna then nonchalantly says DON'T-KNOW to Abigail, who then shrugs her shoulders and turns to Malaika to show was

well DON'T KNOW. Malaika then looked at the two suspiciously, and then herself shrugged and DON'T KNOW. This added visual humour to the scene.

2.4.4 The Blackhole Development

To start Lindi and Caleb off, in developing this sequence, they were given a very long piece of black material. They folded it in half and explored movements with it. After exploring the feeling of the material and seeing the way the material worked, we found the material to breathe better when there was one thin layer, instead of two. Lindi and Caleb then begun working with the full length, single layer of material.

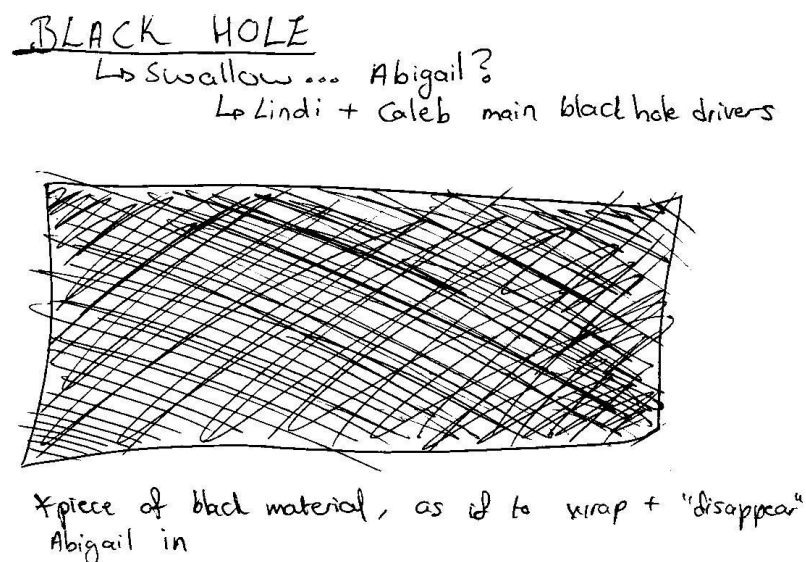


Figure 2. 25

An early picture I drew while considering what sort of props could be useful.

I allowed Lindi and Caleb lots of freedom in developing their blackhole scene. The two have quite different bodies: one being very tall and the other short, one darker skinned and one fair skinned, a male body and a female body. The two of them together created a beautiful image. Lindi, I find, is a very technical mover, while Caleb is a feeler. Looking beautiful together, I thought combining their two different ways of moving would be interesting. When they started improvising ways of working with the cloth, it seemed Caleb preferred to discuss how to use the material, while I would hear Lindi say "Let's try something like..." While neither

is necessarily better than the other, personally, I connect with the ‘doer’ in a rehearsal process, as opposed to a ‘talker’. I was happy to see Lindi’s hands-on attitude appear to influence Caleb to try a more physical approach as well. The emotional and technical began interweaving. The two just improvised. I had very little influence on who they had to create content. What I did for the most part, was work with the astronauts while Lindi and Caleb improvised. I felt they did not want eyes on them constantly. This, I understand, sometimes there are twenty ‘bad’ moves before finding one you like. Some people are more comfortable with first finding five they like, than having someone watching them trying out many different ones. Periodically I would watch what they had created and would point out moves I thought appropriate for the sequence. They seemed to prefer this, instead of me constantly watching them.

However, I had a feeling all the time that there was something missing from the sequence but could not identify what it was. I asked one of the members of my technical crew, Marloise, to watch Lindi and Caleb perform their basic sequences. She too felt there was something lacking. I was worried about this scene because I knew it had to be powerful from the beginning, otherwise the death of an astronaut would seem weak. After some pondering, we realised that there was a problem regarding intention. When the pair fought over the material, it seemed as if they were both very violent and that they wanted to ‘destroy the other power’ as opposed to making it part of their own power. It was harsh and abrupt – each performer was trying to silence the other, instead of, like a blackhole, swallowing whatever is around it to become more powerful. Marloise offered a suggestion to the performers (wording it better than I could): that the characters should attempt to consume one another to build their power, as opposed to silencing the other. This helped change the performers’ mindset and their movements became very grounded and focused. The performers also suggested using something to give them another level. For a following

rehearsal, my Stage Manager brought two rostra. At first, the performers lined them up straight across each other, in the middle of the room. Later in the rehearsal period, we moved the boxes upstage OP-side to allow more space for the astronauts to enter, but also to move the scene away from the very centre of the stage (to add variety to the use of space). The use of the rostra opened up the possibility of exploring levels differently. Sometimes both would stand on a rostrum opposite each other, other times one on the rostrum and one on the ground, and even one on a rostrum and one bending on the floor. The two were also able to jump on the rostra, creating a lift effect of the blackhole. The addition of the idea of ‘consuming’ and extra levels helped evolve the scene.

There were moments where Lindi and Caleb copied each other’s movements – this is the only scene where movements are copied (in the same direction with the intention of being the same) and mirrored. This led to the image of twins. The blackhole thus consisted of two similar entities, who, after realising they are equally powerful and that they would be more powerful together, join forces to attack the astronauts.

The main sign used was BLACKHOLE* (<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/BSL/astronomy/blackhole.html>). This sign, this image, is reoccurring. At the moment of agreement between Lindi and Caleb’s character, the two mirrored BLACKHOLE* to each other. When the astronauts are sucked out of their spaceship, they one-by-one sign BLACKHOLE*. This created an emphasis on the urgency and danger of the sign/blackhole.

Originally, I was going to have Abigail sucked in by the blackhole. This was because in my mind, the image of Abigail falling into a blackhole (material of some sorts, while being supported) would create an intense image. Abigail being the shortest, would have been easiest to get onto the other character’s shoulders. However, this all changed when one day I had all three astronauts interact with Cleo. Lascelles’s Cleo immediately took a liking to

Abigail's character. Abigail became the sweet confidant. Lascelles and Abigail, unconsciously, began moving away from the group and jamming, or discovering, on their own. Malaika and Jenna tended to observe their surroundings more and have a slight stand-offishness to Lascelles. The interaction between Abigail and Lascelles was so sweet, I decided it seemed much more natural, to have the trustworthy character be the one to convince Cleo to help the astronauts. I then had to decide whether to kill off Malaika or Jenna. After contemplating the characters and the logic offered to me from their characteristics, it made sense to me that the nurturing and protective (understanding) character should be killed off in an act of bravery – saving another astronaut. This, in turn I believe was one of the most successful discussions taken. The stern and soft character mourn over their friend, and this brings the two closer to each other in the long run.

2.5 *Set*

I was in two minds about my set: either it should have been epic (with stars everywhere, and realistic props such as a satellite and floating planets) or that there should be minimal set. It was clear from very early in the design process, that the kinds of set props (and methods of making the set props) would be extremely expensive. I had an old satellite that I wanted the technical crew to make safe and useable. However, the materials that were needed would cost about R5000,00. This, to me was ridiculous as that would mean I only had another R2000,00 budget left for costumes and everything else. In the past, I have spent very little budget on costumes, always sourcing it. For this production, I decided that my performers' comfort in costumes and attractiveness in costumes was more important. I decided to go the route of having minimal set, but just enough to positively influence the environment.

My set designer, Alexander, suggested using geometric shapes to create a sort of rock-chair. PVC pipes would be linked in various shapes (and perhaps covering them with black paper). The idea behind it was to create geometric shapes that filled the space – almost

like a combination of stars and dark matter. At the beginning of the process, I could not imagine how the structures would look. I could not imagine the full-sized structures, nor where they would come into play in the play. I was not absolutely against the idea, but it was not inspiring me. I could not see it fitting into the play. In Physical Theatre, I think it is important to have the movement/performance influence the set, and not the other way around – at least if it is not a site-specific performance⁵¹. Though one can gain inspiration from various objects, there should once again be some sort of impulse to prompt the interest in the object/set piece. Although not against the idea, I did not immediately give a go-ahead to make the structures.

While researching puppetry online, I came across an article about kinetic sculptures (Kemp, 2004: p. 803). These structures explored how movement and angle added dimension to a structure. Looking at the pictures in the article, I found the shapes aesthetically pleasing. They also reminded me of Alexander's original idea.

⁵¹ A site-specific performance is “produced in non-theatre sites, and aims to engage with the meaning and history or creative impetus of those sites, and reach audiences who might not come to the theatre” (Routledge Performance Archive, 2019). It is ‘specifically generated from or for one site’, with the inference being that layers of the site would be carefully peeled back through a performance that was not an imposition upon the location but sprung forth from it” (Field, 2008).

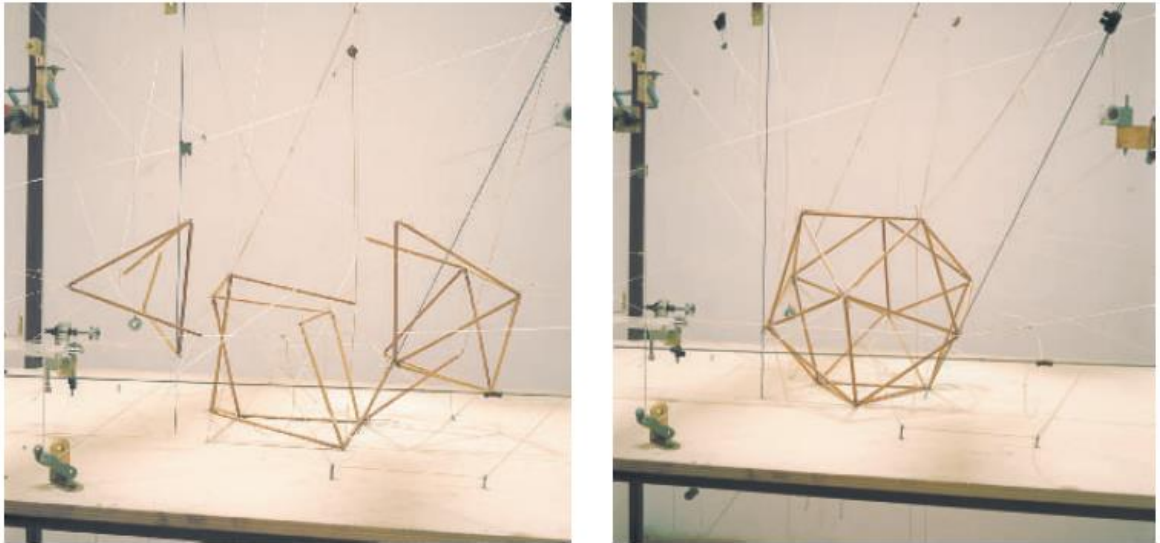


Figure 2. 26

Geometric structures with motion – dependant on where a viewer stands, the structure varies in appearance (Kemp, 2004: p. 803).

I offered the article as inspiration for him. We agreed to paint PVC pipes black, and then attach strands of fairy lights to the pipes. When the lights went on, they neatly lined the patterns of the structure. We used these as two hanging constellations. The idea was to have the lights on when the astronauts were in space, and off when on planets. The lights looked as follows:

1. Moon Greeting: on
2. Departure Star Dance: on
3. Planet X: off
4. The Jenna: on
5. Planet Slinky: off
6. Blackhole: off (for the sake of convenience, the lights stayed off. The crew in the room were preoccupied with safely lowering the blackhole material. They were unable to softly make it to the lights to put them on in time)
7. Cleo – Summer: off
8. 1st Encounter – Cleo & Supernova: off

9. Cleo – Winter: off
10. Planet Heartstone: off
11. 2nd Encounter – Cleo & Supernova: off
12. Return – Flashlight: on
13. Return Star Dance: on
14. Moon: on

The alternating of the fairy-lights being on and off helped establish the spaces the astronauts were travelling. Physical Theatre is about images and the use of the fairy-lights also allowed for a touch of a magic image: during the Jenna scene (where Jenna controls the space shuttle finger puppet) should one have paused the piece and taken a photo, a beautiful mix of dim green, purple and blue lights would be highlighting the stage, the two constellations would be tinkling and the space shuttle would be presented to the audience in mid-flight.

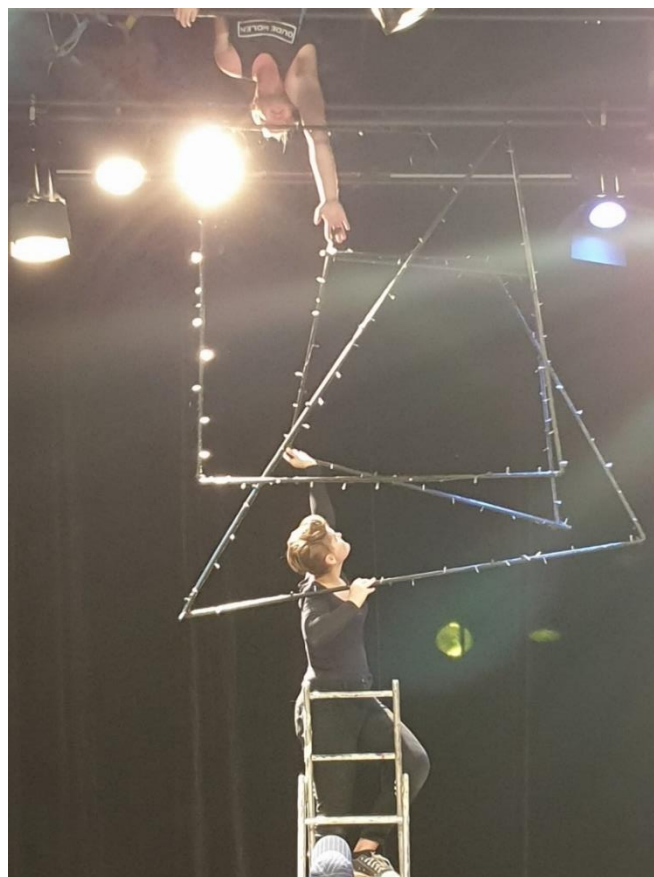


Figure 2. 27

Alexander and Marloise setting up our downstage OP-side constellation.

Besides these constellations, the stage was fairly bare. Lindi and Caleb made use of rostra to assist in giving them an extra level to work with (for variation in their movement). Lindi used a thin table to interact with. These set pieces were brought on and off by the performers themselves. Instead of requiring stagehands to set up a scene (which takes a few moments and sometimes breaks the flow of the scene) we decided to find appropriate ways where a performer would do it themselves. Although the audience could see the mechanics of the set pieces moving on and off stage, the performers incorporated it into their movement. This allowed for smooth scene changes, and the maintenance of a suspension of disbelief.

2.6 Music

DV8, Frantic Assembly, Bone Marrow Theatre, Clockfire Theatre Company and First Physical Theatre Company make use of sound and music to enhance their performances. When I was in Dr Prigge-Pienaar's *Unfettered* production, she too incorporated various genres of music. In all Physical Theatre developed shows I have seen (live or recorded) I have always heard sound: sound of props creating a soundscape live on stage, a constant stream of background music filling in the atmosphere, a duet of sound and silence which engaged audiences... there is always something engaging the auditory senses. Never not hearing sound in these kinds of works, I never thought of not using music.

Besides my love for music, music was always a factor to be considered for the performance because for a majority hearing audience to sit an hour and a half in silence is unnerving. From personal experience, the lack of sound makes many performances feel empty and awkward. I was also aware that my majority audience would be hearing audience members, who, like me, are used to having a constant stream of sound in a Physical Theatre

production. Because of this, I was experimenting with music since the beginning of rehearsals.

During rehearsals, I used instrumentals and soundtracks of films and videogames. If I found a genre, or sound, was not working (such as the performers becoming agitated or uninspired) I skipped to another song. One underlying theme for the music was that it had to be without lyrics. I wanted the opening and closing scene to incorporate the spoken dialogue of the take-off and landing, however, did not want anywhere else in the performance to use spoken dialogue or words – the ‘land of speech’ was reserved for the foyer/mezzanine.

It was from the contact improvisation sessions where I noticed the powerful sway that music had on my performers. Most of the sessions began with a calming, slow song, in a minor key. The use of a minor key created a sombre and melancholic atmosphere. During this time, it appeared the performers were using the jamming exercise as warm-up, as opposed to an active exercise of exploration. All of their movements began slowly, and quite heavily. There was a sluggish atmosphere in the room. The next song, something upbeat and confrontational (such as epic battle music) or upbeat and crisp (drawing inspiration from the cirque genre) would elicit lively and quick movements and interactions between the pairs. The pairs picked up the pace of their movements, and there was an element of daring to their movements. The epic battle music sounds influenced their movements to appear more directed, while the cirque music influenced fun and curious movements. The final song in the set would again be a slower tempo. The songs were in a major key, allowing for a jubilant and content atmosphere among the performers. The movements became slower but were light and flowing.

For most of the scenes, I did the initial selection of music. If I thought a sound or two was appropriate, I played it while the performer performed their piece. From here, especially Caleb and Lascelles, would comment whether they felt the song was appropriate or not. That

was helpful because I could get a better feel of what the two thought would work for them and their characters.

Planet Slinky incorporates *Cirque Du Soleil*'s 'Créature De Siam' (*KURIOS*) and 'La Lune' (*La Nouba*) soundtracks. Planet Slinky took on bright, crazy, colourful, fun and lively characteristics. One way of indicating how strange and upbeat the planet was, was to use some sort of circus/carnival music. The two songs chosen for Planet Slinky weaved an interesting pattern of crescendos and decrescendo to create a lively piece of music, without being annoying. The music follows the classic undertone of 'screamers' (a march played at a fast tempo) (Screamer, 2019). The company has incorporated their own influences in the music, drawing inspiration from many countries and themes, to produce a cirque sound. Circus music is also associated with miming and would therefore enhance the mime aspects of the performance.

Fabio Keiner's music was used in Caleb's exploration of his Supernova. This music used to explore the character, can be described as a repetitive buzzing sound – a constant vibration on the same frequency. His style may be very suited to thriller films. Although I thought it generally appropriate to match the danger of the Supernova, Caleb found the music very eerie and he became highly uncomfortable with the underlying low buzz sounds. We had to choose very carefully which song Caleb was able to work with, without feeling anxious and claustrophobic.

Although in the end not used, Tyler Bates was another musician we experimented with. He experiments with his instruments to give the sounds created a different tone to what the instrument normally makes. For example, an electric guitar will be played using a violin bow. This music was mostly used to explore Lindi's Moon scene, where the meteors strike. We wanted to find similar music to that for the meteor scene – epic, aggressive and energetic. This kind of music has a spacelike feel to it – something out of this world. The songs looked

at came from the *John Wick Chapter 2* movie soundtrack. There were hard, but clean and precise movements in the song, which Lindi could translate into her own movements, bringing about the danger and destruction the meteors would cause. Lindi offered some of her own music that she found – eventually, two of the three songs she had were used.

Probably the most popular sound, amongst the cast, was that of Sergey Cheremisinov. His style varies from light and soft piano compositions, to tranquil mood pieces, to curious fantasy/adventure tunes, to mournful and sorrowful compositions. The music is not overpowering, like some instrumental pieces are. For example, sometimes a violin-driven piece becomes tiring to listen to. Cheremisinov finds a balance between his instruments. The songs all flowed well and allowed for easy movement. This music seemed to resonate the most with the performers in general – making his music the most utilised in the performance.

2.7 Costumes

In 2018 I had the opportunity to work with Vanessa Reyneke from the SU General Linguistics Department on the SASL short film *Living On The Edge*. Vanessa is involved in the creation of SASL classroom materials. She asked my advice regarding costumes for various other short films that she and her team were in the process of shooting. After my suggestions, she gave me feedback. For the one short film I suggested one of the characters wear a bright light and warm colour such as yellow or orange. Reyneke (2018) told me that bright colours and busy patterns are distracting and instead suggested, “[a] soft yellow would be better, because bright yellow will draw attention away in ‘Deaf’s eyes’.” In retrospect this seemed logical, however at the time I did not realise it. While taking Sign Language classes, watching many interpretation/translation videos and dictionary entries, I noticed that the signers wore black clothing 99% of the time. I came to learn that interpreters had a dress code – plain black clothing – as not to pull unwanted attention to themselves and to avoid distracting those they are signing to with bold and flashy colours/accessories (MT &

Associates, 2019: Clothing to Contrast Skin Tone). This had a huge influence on my colour scheme for costumes. I was determined the colours we used should either be of a slightly darker or dirtier nature, than the bright and pale shades so that the colour in the costumes did not become too ‘loud’.

Besides accessories being distracting to the ‘Deaf eye’, accessories are often unpredictable. None of the performers were accessory heavy, as the accessories posed a potential danger of injuring the performers as they moved. They also were a potential extra discomfort. We decided to keep the costume accessories to a minimum.

I had many costume ideas for the characters. I have very little experience in designing and creating costumes: I did not know what our budget could cover and whether my ideas were practical. One of the difficulties I discovered, is my indecisiveness. I relied heavily on the experience and advice of Mareleen Theron⁵², my costume designer, seamstress, costume coordinator and costumier for the production. We went to three different material shops to search for various colours and types of fabrics that would work for each character. I found it extremely helpful to visit the shops with Mareleen and to discuss with her, while comparing, on the spot. I think the saying “I don’t know what I want. But I know what I don’t want”, applies well to me. It was easier for me to show her, than to explain to her in words, what I wanted. She also commented for her, as a designer, she found it easier to show me options, because from there she could derive what I did not like and what would still be appropriate for a Physical Theatre piece. Mareleen has made costumes for Physical Theatre productions before and therefore has a better understanding of appropriate patterns and materials that allow for a variety of movements, how the materials would react to the lighting on stage and

⁵² Mareleen Theron (née Smit) is the current Wardrobe Assistant at the *Stellenbosch University* Drama Department.

how the materials will influence the budget. While she was giving input on these levels, I was able to focus on colours and patterns that would not distract the ‘Deaf eye’.

A clear face is once again very important for Sign Language, and the expression of emotions on the face. Because there were times the performers were upstage and relatively far from the audience, there had to be some elevation to the performers face, or their facial expressions would be lost. All the performers wore straight make-up, where they emphasised their facial features. They used eyeliner and mascara to make their eyes stand out. They used contour to highlight their jaw, and had a neutral to slightly red lipstick on, to make their lips more prominent. This make-up framed the performer’s face and made it more visible on stage under the lighting.

Another requirement set for keeping the face open and easily readable, was for the performers to all keep their hair out of their face. Having hair fall in one’s mouth and face while moving is unpleasant – and as the performance was physical, this would happen often. Hair can also obscure one’s face while signing. It is important to keep one’s hair neat and away from the eyes and mouth, so that one can understand when someone is signing (as facial expression is a vital part of the language). Abigail was our hairstylist. Abigail writes in her journal: “I was in charge of hair. I truly enjoyed being the stylist, not going to lie. It reminded me of when I used to plait hair at school”. She would attempt various plaits for different people to experiment which one was the most effective (would stay in and allow for easy movement) for each performer. Malaika, Jenna, Abigail, Lascelles and Lindi all had their hair tied back to some degree – if their hair was loose, Abigail would take the front-side strands and braid them, pinning them up, just to add that extra bit of visibility to the performer’s face.

It was important to consider the information from Vanessa (for ‘Deaf eyes’ for the deaf audience) and apply them to the costumes, while at the same time designing costumes

that would be comfortable and practical. The styles, materials and even colours of the costumes affected the quality of the movements and the way the story was told. If Lascelles dress were a blue/purple colour, her movements would have been affected and she would have in some ways had to alter her signs used to correspond with her costume. Had Caleb been uncomfortable and unable to move with the ribbons on his pair of pants, we would have had to alter their length and that would have had an affect on his heavy and elongated movements. Allowing the performers to have some say over their costumes and overall outfit also gave ownership to them, allowing them to feel they were co-creating on another level (not just movement wise). The explaining of the costumes and creation of the costumes is important because it incorporates the collaborative nature of Physical Theatre.

2.7.1 Astronauts

Mareleen and I discussed the possibility of having a top and pants costume, such as a white top with a linear colour stripe, and a white legging, or a sort of biker jacket. Astronaut suits are usually extremely bulky, and for the sake of a Physical Theatre piece, I wanted to avoid too bulky clothing because one would be unable to see the movements of the body. If the costumes were too bulky, it would also draw attention away from the Sign Language. I wanted something more streamlined for the astronauts.

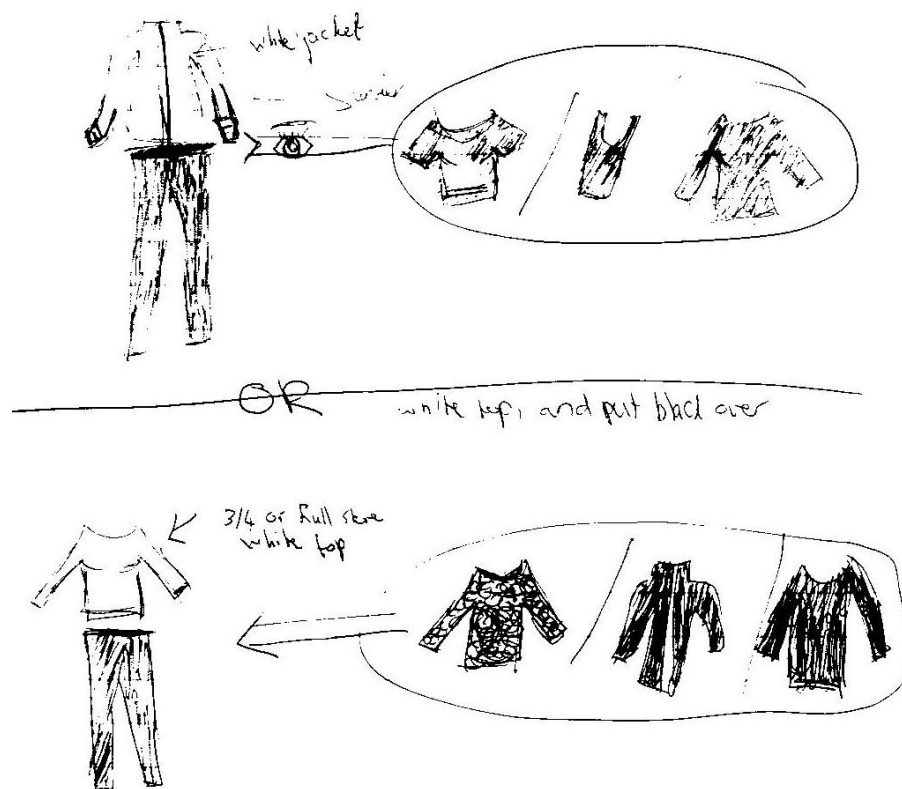


Figure 2. 28

Instead of a realistic astronaut outfit, I considered the above designs – a two-piece costume, either consisting of basic-black and a white top of some sort, or a both parts being white.

Finding a material that would work well for two separate clothing items was difficult because a material that would work well for the top, would not work for a bottom. Mareleen also explained how white clothing, especially under harsh lighting, can cause a person to look much bigger than they really are. I wanted my performers to be as comfortable as possible in their costumes, and because I know how it feels to performer in uncomfortable clothing, we tried to find something else that might work. If we changed the colour to a mild or dark grey, the costume would not read 'astronaut' anymore. Some of the astronaut suits we found on the internet were orange, but that was extremely bright and would not work for me. The solution found was that of a jumpsuit: not only would Mareleen be able to match the top and bottom materials (unifying the suit), but the style would also allow that the performers' movements

would not lift their tops up, as a two piece would likely do. While looking for material, we found a type of blocking-out curtain fabric – one was white and one that had a hint of grey in it (if they were not next to each other, one would never know the difference). We opted for the grey tinge, which worked very well.

I wanted a way to link the astronaut's costume to their puppet. The original finger puppets' colours were blue (Malaika), green (Jenna) and red (Abigail). I decided to work with these three colours in the human astronaut costumes, to unify the characters. With the available colours, we opted for a slightly darker shade of each colour. The costumes were given ribbing (at the wrists and ankles) and piping down the side of the jumpsuits in the colour of their astronauts.

With the first costume parade, we found that the jumpsuit pattern was slightly problematic for a Physical Theatre production, though with Mareleen and Elrina Marais's⁵³ expertise, not unsolvable. The crotch area was extremely low which resulted in the restriction of the astronauts' leg movements. They would be unable to lift their leg much higher than taking a big step. Mareleen had to then lift the crotch. The loss of stretch was counteracted by making sure the belt was made of a stretchy material.

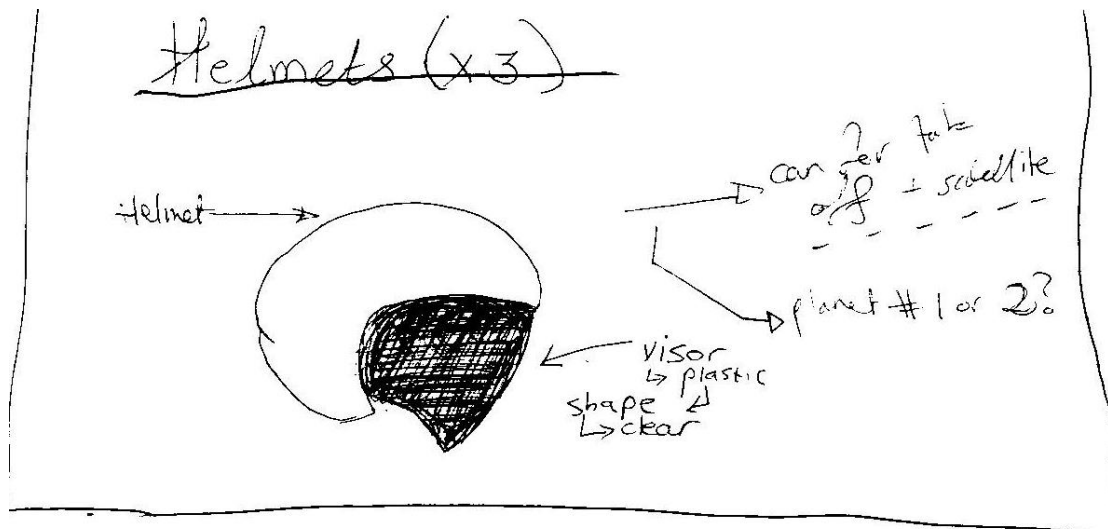
⁵³ Elrina Marais serves as the current Head of Wardrobe at the *Stellenbosch University* Drama Department.



Figure 2. 29

To continue with the idea of a sleek uniform, this SpaceX astronaut suit fit was ideal (DailyMail, 2018).

As astronauts, an important part of the costume was to incorporate a helmet. My technical team altered and painted three bicycle helmets to look the same. The helmets proved a slightly difficult task, as I was torn between using a visor or not. This was to play with the idea of oxygen being made available to the astronauts. I toyed around with the idea of various breathing apparatus: scuba-diving to airforce to Pokémon anime designs (Scuba mask, n.d.) were considered (shown in the picture below). A scuba-diving mask would obscure the eyes, while the airforce pilot helmet would be too big and obscure the entire face – which was not favoured as facial expressions were extremely important in the performance. My Stage Manager suggested making light oxygen tanks/backpacks for the astronauts to wear. However, this would be bulky and restrict movement.



Problem = not practical to do all movement with helmet on, in outer space.

Solution?

↳ must get something to breath oxygen...

↳ or ~~lips~~



Figure 2. 30

Possible helmet designs that would contribute to the idea of oxygen being supplied to the astronauts.

In the end, while discussing the problem with Lulu and Alexander, our solution of not being able to breathe without helmets was offered by balloons which the astronauts would be given on Planet Slinky. Introducing the balloons early in Planet Slinky allowed the audience to get used to the idea that the astronauts were getting their oxygen from the helmets they

wore – even though there was no tank or visor or visible oxygen mechanism. The oxygen-balloons allowed for new movement possibilities in the performance – the performers would have uninhibited movement as there were no tanks or extra materials attached to them which may have make movements difficult.



Figure 2. 31

Commander Malaika – final evening.



Figure 2. 32

Command Pilot Jenna - final evening.



Figure 2. 33

Flight Engineer Abby – final evening.



Figure 2. 34

The shades of red, green and blue complimenting each other, all having a darker shade.



Figure 2. 35

The set of astronaut helmets. The helmets were painted white, to unify the accessory.

2.7.2 Cleo

My original idea for Lascelles' costume was a bodysuit of sorts – something similar to a figure-skaters leotard: something that had intricate patterns (likely floral patterns) and used a nude-and-colour scheme. Unfortunately, this would have been very time consuming for the little time we had. I liked the idea of a kind of skin showing design – a translucent material or a sort of netting look. One solution we found was to have the bodice slightly more nude/revealing and create a flowing skirt – influenced by an Elie Saab evening dress. The costume would be close-fitting, but still have flow which would tie in with Cleo's image of flow and wrapping (vines).

We originally looked at using purples and blues in Lascelles' Cleo costume, however, the shades clashed very much with the Moon. I wanted to give equal weight to the Moon and Cleo, and thus wanted their costumes to differ from each other so that the audience could identify the two as individual entities. Instead of blues, purples and pinks, Mareleen and I searched for green fabrics. The decision was between an olive green and a dark forest green. There were two kinds of material that were to be laid over each other, and the dark forest

green was much better suited to the character. I used this change of colour to give Lascelles a slightly different impulse to develop her character. Although Lascelles had been experimenting with weather signs, she was not incorporating it in the bigger personality of her character. By offering a change in her character colour, she found more inspiration from the natural world and drew inspiration from forests and lush landscapes. She was more able to see herself in her environment (specifically summer) – where there were trees, flowers and vines. She began incorporating Wringing actions (further developed using the Laban exercises) to find ways to twist and twirl her body to imitate vines growing.



Figure 2. 36

The Moon goddess from Cirque Du Soleil's 'Amaluna'. One of the initial costume designs I encountered (which reminded me of ice-skating or gymnastics outfits), which highly influenced the Cleo costume (Buckley, 2015).



Figure 2. 37

A rhinestone patterned bodysuit (Pindrave, 2018).



Figure 2. 38

A 2017 sky blue Elie Saab evening dress, with short sleeves and beaded lace (DHGate.com, n.d.).



Figure 2. 39

Cleo: front, showing the leaf-like patterns.



Figure 2. 40

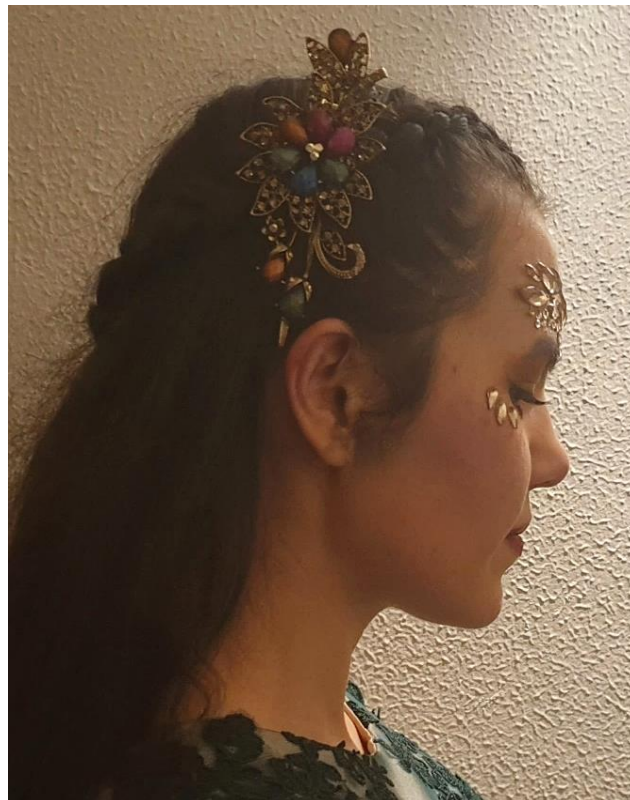
A press-stud was used to attach the Heartstone to the dress.



*Figure 2. 41**Cleo – final evening.*

Lascelles had between four and five minutes to complete her costume change from basic black to Cleo. As a result, we had to find a simple make-up and accessory solution.

To incorporate a bit more gold and shine, to emphasise the feeling of royalty of the character, once Lascelles's hair was braided, a floral gem clip was added on either side of her head. The flowers tied in with the floral pattern on the dress. The make-up consisted of make-up gems that could easily and quickly be pressed onto her face. These gems were a mix between yellow gold and rose gold. These gems were a good balance on Lascelles's face and were not extremely distracting to the audience. The gems did not obscure her facial expressions, nor distract from her signing.

*Figure 2. 42*

Cleo's hair accessories – there was one of these multi-coloured flower clips one each side of her head.

2.7.3 *Supernova*

Caleb's Supernova costume was a struggle for me. For a long time, I could not picture him in a costume. Two of my inspiration pictures came from Cirque Du Soleil costumes – one from *Varekai* and one from *Dralion*. The *Dralion* costume was a deep maroon long leotard, with a beautiful chest pattern. The *Varekai* costumes on the other hand, had beautiful, long flowy arms.



Figure 2. 43

Cirque Du Soleil 'Dralion' aerial hoop artist costume (Aeropaca, 2018).



Figure 2. 44

Cirque Du Soleil Varekai Georgian Dance costumes (Cirque Du Soleil, n.d.).

Moving away from the tight-fitting costume, Mareleen suggested Harem pants to me one day and showed me a couple of pictures of the design. The idea was nice, however I did not like the extremely bagginess of the pants. Mareleen then made a slimmer fitting Harem.



Figure 2. 45

Example of a style of harem pants that Mareleen and I found (Simplicitie, 2019). My biggest concern was how big and baggy the pants were. Mareleen was able to keep the shape but make it slimmer.

To bring in the idea of the flow by the shoulders, two long straps (of two different shades of red) were added on either side of the pants, which could be tied in different ways,

like an infinity dress. First and foremost, they had to be tied in such a way that they would not fall off while he was doing his sequences. I allowed Caleb to explore how he would prefer to tie the straps. He had between eight to ten minutes usually to complete his costume change. In the limited time, Caleb had to find a way of tying the straps so that they would 1. not fall off when he moved and 2. so that they would not hurt him when he was moving and fighting Lascelles.



Figure 2. 46

Two shades of red, both on the darker side, with a Harem pants of coal/chrome.

Caleb's make-up was quick and simple. When the Supernova appears the first time, he has a light smear of black over his eyes. When he returns the second time, stronger and deadlier, the black had expanded and become darker. Because there was not much signing in the character's scenes, it was not as important to keep his face bright and open. The make-up, although dark and round the eyes, is not bright and busy, so it does not distract from his movements.



Figure 2. 47

Figure 2. 48

Figure 2. 49

Supernova: front, side and back on the final evening.

2.7.4 Moon

Lindi's interpretation of her Moon was very different at the beginning of the process, to what she ended with (as previously discusses), and while Mareleen and I discussed her initial costume, we agreed we could play with the abstract idea of the moon. Lindi constantly has pink streaks in her hair, and this prompted us to look at using pink in our colour scheme. Pinks, silvers and greys also created a softer, romantic atmosphere for the Moon.



Figure 2. 50

NyaNya babydoll dress which was one of the initial designs I wanted for Lindi, while we were working on her first interpretation of the moon (My Lolita Dress, 2017).

After Lindi changed her Moon, the costume idea had to change as well. Lindi had the most input regarding her costume, as opposed the other performers. The Moon's transformation costume was inspired by a design project that Lindi did in high school. She sent me videos of transformation outfits – a two-way outfit, where the one way of wearing it is hidden, till by pulling a string or unclipping a section reveals the second costume. Mareleen designed a costume where the first look had a pale dirty pink skirt and a sparkly loose-fitting top. The top had two ribbons connected to each shoulder, so what when the ribbons were pulled out, the top would fall over the skirt and create a sleeker black dress. Although the top of the dress was a white silver and sparkly, because the sparkles were even and the top had a very soft cut, it did not read as 'loud' to me. If the fabric, for example, was a light grey and had shiny silver polka dots on it, I feel that would have been problematic.

The material used for the ribbon and top made it difficult for Lindi to do the transformation smoothly for every change – there were moments when the material, somewhat coarse and sticky, would get stuck. She would then have to improvise in her piece where an appropriate moment would be to get the ribbon loose.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJcKKCIN_hQ

An example of a transformation dress which Lindi sent me (Labood TV, 2015).



Figure 2. 51



Figure 2. 52



Figure 2. 53

Black Moon: front, back and close-up of the side of the dress. The dress would not work if a zip had to be put in, resulting in Mareleen using this design.



Figure 2. 54



Figure 2. 55



Figure 2. 56

Moon: comparison of before and after, on the final show night.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2k3m9gnSApU>

A recording of Lindi showing the transformation of the top-skirt to dress of the Moon costume.

Lindi had loose hair, but a braid neatly removed her front-side hair from her face.

Within the braid, there were three ballet-bun (bobby) pins with delicate silver flowers. These flowers, from a distance, looked like stars. Because the moon and stars are always related to each other, it was a fitting addition to her costume. To avoid possible injury, the flower-stars had to be placed on the (left) side of her head which she did not use for her headstands and rolls.

Her make-up included slightly darker lips than her basic black outfit. The darker lips emphasised her facial expressions. Adhering to the black-grey-pink colour scheme, Lindi used a dark pink to contour her face, and a silver highlighter to emphasise some features. This gave her skin a reflective silvery quality.



Figure 2. 57

*Lindi was allowed to dye her hair pink again – though it eventually was washed out by the lighting.
The fine silver flower ballet-bun pins, when seen from a distance, looked like stars.*

2.7.5 Basic Black

Basic black is a common costume in Physical Theatre. Mime artists tend to wear black clothing. The contrast in clothing and their faces/hands allows greater emphasis on their expressions and movements. Neat, comfortable basic black clothing has the advantage of not obscuring the body like a costume would (Accomazzo, 2013: Physical theatre and the silent tragedy of the inanimate). It also disregards the expectations and connotations that arise from colours and styles.

In *Unfettered*, Dr Prigge-Pinaar was very conscious of her performers wearing unified clothes, but also clothes which does not ‘give character’ to the performer. This encouraged me find unity in the basic black costumes in *Mission: Heartstone* as well.

Lascalles, Caleb, Lindi and Jenna had scenes where they were in basic black. To unify them in the space, everyone used gym leggings. Lascalles, Lindi and Jenna had a long-sleeved black top, while Caleb had a short sleeved black top. My aim was for them to look somewhat similar to each other, because if one had a tracksuit pants, another a short cycle pants and one a legging, while one wore a vest, another long-sleeved turtle neck and one a baggy t-shirt, they would look extremely uncoordinated next to each other. This would break the illusion between the astronauts and the planet-performers.

2.7.6 *Air Marshaller*

Lulu and Eduan were able to source a yellow reflecting safety vest from the Drama Department's Wardrobe. They were also able to find two reflecting orange wands (handheld illuminated sticks). Under the vest, Eduan wore basic black clothing. This would make his movement easier for his backstage work. The black also allowed the bright orange to stand out, drawing attention to him as he entered a room. He, in turn, acted as a beacon.



Figure 2. 58

Military air marshaller uniform (Bold Method, 2015).



Figure 2. 59

Eduan's costume was simple, however effective. He easily caught the attention of the audience.

The addition of costumes excited and inspired the cast. Wearing costumes brings a new dimension to a character. It also changes a performer's state of mind, as they begin feeling themselves more in the role. When the performers were finally able to rehearse in their sequences in their costumes, they could adjust their movements accordingly. For example, Lascelles had a moment where she sits on her knees on the floor, but with her dress on it was difficult to get up from that position again as her dress would get caught under her so she had to adjust her position. Caleb had to tie his costume in a such a way that it would not fall off or hurt him when he did his sequence, but he also had to test out the effectiveness of his chosen wrapping/tying-up of the costume against Lascelles. As the two moved closely together and had lifts, the two needed to wear their costumes to rehearse the scene and adjust their movements, if need be. The astronauts were able to rehearse with their bulkier-than-basic-black rehearsal outfits. This allowed them the chance to explore how their puppet could be hidden in collar or sleeves, and which would be the most effective. Lindi had to often

practice loosening her transformation dress, as the material would sometimes get caught on itself and not loosen. Because of this delay in her costume transforming, she decided to pull the strings earlier than she had planned (to ensure by the time she finished her spin and fell to the floor, her dress would change).

From costumes to characters to music, the cast and crew had a great deal of influence in the *Mission: Heartstone*. While I, as the director had had ideas for the show, it was because of the cast's involvement and suggestions that the performance developed so richly. This collaboration from the cast and crew created a fun and visually stunning piece of theatre. The cast was always ready and willing to adapt their movements to work for the good of the play.

3. Chapter Three: Performance

3.1 Advertisement

During the week leading up to the performance, our advertising increased. Printed posters were put up around the department and at several main campus points. The majority of those involved in the production either posted on their Facebook or Instagram accounts. In an attempt to create an advertisement directed towards possible deaf audience members, I approached my three ‘astronauts’ and asked them to sign a short phrase – this way, there would be a visual advertisement in SASL to post on our social media. I showed them how to sign a simple sentence such as “Buy your tickets now”, as well as the available synonyms. To add some variety to the video adverts, they had to decide for themselves which signs to use. In SASL, I know of two signs for ‘ticket’. Abigail and Jenna opted to use the same TICKET sign, while Malaika used the other.

Below are the three videos that were posted:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxF9Gy74Djk>

Abigail’s sentence was TICKET BUY NOW: “Buy your ticket now”. Abigail composed a ‘short and sweet’ sentence – however, to my knowledge, it was grammatically correct, and her five parameters⁵⁴ were all correct. Unlike her more natural signing in the performance, her signing was slightly stagnated. In the video, she does not use mouthings or mouth gestures, but merely the SASL signs. In the production, Abigail tended to do the same.

2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTZKnfn6J14>

Malaika incorporated the following sentences: WHO _le. INDEX1 _le⁵⁵. NO. INDEX2 TICKET BUY NOW: “Who? Me? No! You buy your ticket now!” True to

⁵⁴ “There are 5 parameters which are found in Sign Languages: handshape, orientation (of the palm), location, movement and facial expressions (non-manual markers)” (Marais, 2018: p. 20).

⁵⁵ In retrospect, this should have been a _re.

Malaika's personality, she wanted to perform more in her video advertisement. She sat on the couch, and with words and gestures she indicated the following scenario: looking off into the distance, spinning her head to the camera when she noticed it approach her, and with words and gestures "Who? Oh, me?" (pointing to herself) and then followed with her sign language. To avoid the spoken word, I suggested to Malaika to use the sign for WHO, and to point to herself. Malaika used very clear mouthings and mouth gestures (such as the pouting lips on 'no'). This possibly appealed to hearing viewers because they could see the mouthing of the words used. Malaika also did this in the production itself.

3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TKVudc_SaU

Jenna's sentence was INDEX2 TICKET BUY TODAY: 'Buy your ticket today'.

Jenna also composed a relatively short and simple sentence. In the above recording, Jenna too has slightly abrupt signs. In general, I found Jenna's signing to be slightly 'harder' than her fellow astronauts. In the recording, all the signs seem to be created with the correct parameters in mind, except for TODAY. Jenna faces her palm inwards, instead of upwards (TODAY is the same as NOW, except it has a repetitive round motion). This, to my knowledge, did not affect the meaning of the sentence.

The videos were posted to the Facebook events page (*Mission: Heartstone*⁵⁶) and my personal Instagram account. They were tagged with the following hashtags with the hope that it would reach a wider audience: #MissionHeartstone, #SASL, #SouthAfricanSignLanguage, #SignLanguage, #deafawareness and other theatre hashtags. I also contacted the founder of *Deaf Confidence*, Tracy Duncan⁵⁷. *Deaf Confidence*, on Instagram, describes themselves as

⁵⁶ The events page on Facebook can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2331924177131717/>.

⁵⁷ Tracy Duncan is *Mrs Deaf South Africa 2018* and was crowned *Ms Deaf International 2nd Princess* in 2019. She actively arranges SASL events in South Africa to bring awareness to the language and Deaf community.

“a national movement across South Africa, to motivate the Deaf and find their ability in their disability [...]”. I had been following their page for a few weeks and thought it would be one of my more successful ways of reaching out to the deaf and Deaf community to inform them about the performance. Unfortunately, due to some marketing issues that we did not have time to sort out, our poster could not be shared on their page. However, Tracy and her team informed me that they shared it on their personal messaging group.

3.2 *Mindfulness and Focus*

Half an hour before each performance, I had my performers come into the performance space, where I lead them through various focus and mindfulness exercises.

On Thursday (20th June) I guided the performers in a mindfulness exercise, adapting one that I have learnt from personal therapy. It incorporates becoming present and mindful of what is happening around oneself by concentrating on each of the five senses individually. I had the performers enter the performance space, sit in a circle, hold hands and close their eyes. The order was to focus on what they heard, smelt, tasted, felt and finally, what they saw. Each time they began within themselves, or the closest area to their bodies, and slowly made that circle of focus bigger and bigger, till it filled the performance space, and then exceeded the performance space. They then slowly stood up and took a moment to recover and shake-out. This shaking out helped the performers to relieve any tightness that had accumulated in their muscles and got the blood flowing which, in turn, energised the performers (Imbo, 2018).

On Friday (21st June), I did a little exercise I had tried during my Honours exam of *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Blockhead* (written by Bert V. Royal). This exercise was inspired by an exercise given by lecturer Rufus Swart during my first year (2015) while learning about the Meisner Technique. During the process of *Dog Sees God*, there was a lot of tension between my cast members, for various reasons. As this was the first time I had

worked with a large group, when various personalities clashed, I had no prior experience to draw from about how to handle the situation. In an attempt to manage personality clashes on the evening of the performance, I had each cast member sitting in pairs, directly facing each other. After thirty seconds of just looking at the cast member opposite them, they switched partners. This continued until each member had had a chance to sit opposite everyone else. I hoped this exercise would focus the actors, make them present within themselves, with the person opposite them and to make a brief connection with the person opposite them as well. Instead of interacting as characters, they were expected to be themselves, and open about their personal state of mind/emotions. For some of the actors, it seemed to help. As always, it did not help for everyone.

I felt the *Mission: Heartstone* ensemble could benefit from the same exercise, again to focus themselves and make them present with each other. I did not specifically state that they were not to talk to each other or make a sound. I left that to their interpretation. At the beginning, there was a slight awkwardness in the air – as can be expected as staring into someone’s eyes and face can elicit a feeling of vulnerability and make one feel uncomfortable. While they were busy with the exercise, I observed that most of the time the ensemble was smiling – some with a big broad smile, and some with a little grin. Lascelles was the first one who began laughing heartily, which caused a ripple effect in the ensemble. This allowed the ensemble to relax and feel more open and receptive to each other. There never seemed to be a moment when there was a negative and ‘bad’ kind of tension or moment of silence between the ensemble – there was a peaceful and joyous atmosphere among them. After the exercise, they once again took a moment to shake themselves out before checking their props before the show.

On the final evening, Saturday (22nd June), the ensemble sat in a circle, held each other’s hands and closed their eyes. They were given a few moments to breathe deeply.

Thereafter I prompted them to go through each scene in their mind, from beginning to the end. They were asked to think about: a scene which they enjoyed and were excited to perform again, and a scene they were not satisfied with and how they could change it. I wanted to reinforce the notion that ensemble could feel comfortable and confident in their final show because “It’s your moves. Your story. You created and put the piece together”. They then gathered their thoughts, and I asked them to focus on their ensemble – to feel their presence and their energy in the circle, and to feel the support the ensemble had given to each other. After gently squeezing the hands of the people next to them, they released hands and slowly stood up. I let them shake-out for a second and they then proceeded to do their final prop checks.

Because the performers had had very little time to become accustomed to the performance space, I thought it important for them to use the actual stage/floor space before the performance. It gave them the opportunity to familiarise themselves and get comfortable with their space, and themselves within the space.

I also felt the performers needed a moment where they were completely silent and just focused on themselves and the performance. During show warm-ups, I allowed the performers to warm-up by themselves - I do not know if it followed the same pattern every night. When I was present, I observed that it consisted mainly of relaxed, stretching activities. What concerned me, was the amount of continuous talking/chatter that was going on. Having experience in working with various casts, I know that different people warm-up in different ways and focus differently. However, I am aware that the louder, bolder and more extroverted personalities can easily overshadow those who would prefer to be silent and contained. I found that two of my performers preferred a bit more silent focus work (I personally fall into this group as well) and, in their way, tried to steer the others to be more,

for the lack of a better term, ‘quietly focused’. As the director, it was easier for me to intervene and call for a quieter environment.

The mindfulness and focus exercises were much needed and extremely successful. I saw a huge positive change in the performers’ demeanours. There was a sense of calmness, trust and coherence in the group that I had not observed before. All, much needed attributes for the success of the play.

The calmness and connection were important because it created an atmosphere of trust between the performers. There were moments in the play where the performers had to trust and rely on each other for help and safety. Some examples were Abigail’s lift, Jenna balancing on Malaika during The Jenna scene and Lascelles balancing on Caleb’s shoulders. The performers had to feel completely confident, comfortable and safe to be able to perform these moves with confidence. This calmness also drove away unnecessary stress and anxieties about the performance. Although some nervousness before a show can be helpful (as the rise of adrenaline can make one hyper aware of their environment), an overload of nervousness can affect not only the performer’s concentration, but also tire out their bodies. This unnecessary tension can cause rigidity in performer’s bodies.

It was also good for the groups’ morale in general. Everyone had a greater sense of confidence (for themselves, and the cast/crew). I could see, they felt self-assured about the work that they had created, and the performance they were about to give. They knew what they were there for, and should something not go as planned, they were rehearsed enough to find their way back to a point of comfort.

From the cast, this aura of being grounded and aware, extended to me and the crew. It solidified the relationship between all parties involved in the production. While we each had our own roles to play, we became an ensemble.

3.3 Performance Evenings & Adaptations Based on Each Performance

3.3.1 Opening Night (20 June 2019)

After again attempting to lower the Slinky King from the roof before the start of the show, I decided to abort the idea. It was not happening smoothly and fast enough and was breaking the rhythm of the scene. Instead, the actors were asked to treat it as just another toy that the planet-performers want the astronauts to play with. As a result, Caleb, Lindi and Lascelles went off-stage to fetch the Slinky King, while Abigail, Malaika and Jenna were signing to each other.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, our budget ran out and we were unable to fill our six balloons (per evening) with helium, as originally planned. We therefore had to blow the balloons up ourselves every evening. Each astronaut chose a colour balloon (green, pink, yellow), blew it up and used it. That prevented them from handling another person's balloon and possibly creating a health risk. The gasps of air they took from the balloons during the play, were, in any case, faked. The helium filled balloons were part of our original planning though, and I was unhappy that a lack of funding prevented us from using it. Although the lack of floating balloons did not take away much from the story, it would have added to the fun, bounciness and low gravity atmosphere of Planet Slinky.

After the show, the performers told me that the sound system was playing too softly for them to clearly hear the music. Sitting in the audience, I also had had trouble hearing clearly all the time.

This show was, without a doubt, the roughest run and had the most issues. Being the first actual run without interruptions from cast or crew, and the first official and larger than one-person audience to view the show, some problems were expected. With the limited time we were allocated to move in, my crew was not able to identify and dispose of all the technical bugs which we encountered, such as rouge lighting (a special/spotlight flew across

the stage for no apparent reason. The cast also needed time to figure out the changes in specific blocking which occurred when moving from the movement room and rehearsal room, to the Lab stage.

3.3.2 Second Performance (21 June 2019)

The presenting of the Slinky King on the second evening was much smoother and more successful than the first evening. The planet-performers invested in the idea that the giant slinky was another toy, and it became much clearer as an audience member what the new object was being used for. Lindi, Caleb and Lascelles took their time presenting the Slinky King – handling it by twisting it and giving complete focus.

For this evening, the Moon sequence was shortened. Lindi's piece built up speed during the previous evening's performance, influenced by nerves and the energy projected by the audience. The sound technician deleted thirty seconds off the end of the first song. We thought this would be sufficient, however, once again, Lindi executed her sequence faster than in rehearsals. I was not particularly concerned because Lindi performs better at a higher tempo and adding speed to the piece seemed to add some enthusiasm to her performance.

Following a comment from two or three audience members (that having a more detailed written overview of the play available beforehand would have made the show much more accessible to someone that does not understand signing at all) I asked that the introduction dialogue of the astronauts be included in the program, as well as their performance explanation for the reason of their mission be made slightly longer and clearer. This included a firmer attitude in their description of the mission. Abigail was given an extra sign: EARTH SAVE.

A specific signing error occurred from Lascelles during her scene with the astronauts. Her 1HELP2, was incorrect: instead of an extended thumb, it was closed on her fist. I was not sure if this 'wrong' sign has a meaning in SASL. While discussing the play after the show,

Lascelles confessed that she was aware of her mistake. As the movement was so quick, she had no time to correct it, unless she wanted to sign again (such as repeating a line correctly).

Two lighting cues were changed for this evening. On Planet X, there were patterned stationary lights: a yellow/orange pattern, over a red flood of lighting. As opposed to the lights being stationary, I had my lighting technician make the yellow/orange lights move at a medium pace across the stage, to create a back-and-forth sway (adding to the image of desert sands). We also added extra side-lighting earlier to Cleo and the Supernova's final confrontation. During the previous evening, there was merely red lighting shining into the space where the confrontation occurs. However, as an audience member, I found that I could barely see facial expressions and even movements were darkened. Instead of only having the side light appearing when Cleo makes her final jump, we made use of the lights right from the beginning, where Cleo and the supernova connect shoulder-to-shoulder on the floor.

The spaceship finger puppet kept falling over on the first evening when placed on the floor (the landing on each planet). I gave the crew a wooden weight to put on the puppet. It added some weight to the finger puppet and the extended legs meant that the astronauts had to handle the puppet differently. This fix was extremely important, because if the spaceship fell over, there would be a break in the logic of being able to pick the spaceship up (or, the lack of the astronauts being able to pick it up, and needing Lascelles's help in the end). In other words, when the spaceship 'landed' on Planet X, it needed to stand up. The same with Planet Slinky. On Planet Heartstone, the spaceship again lands straight up. It is Cleo who then accidentally knocks over the spaceship and the two astronauts are unable to pick it up by themselves. In the end, after they became friends, the astronauts ask Cleo to help them pick it up. If the audience saw the astronauts picking the spaceship up by themselves earlier in the play, it would not make much sense why suddenly on Planet Heartstone, they could not do the same.

Unfortunately, there was a hiccup with the last foyer scene. Abigail and Malaika forgot to carry Jenna's helmet with them downstairs. Although this does not drastically change the ending, it was a short but important moment of remembering Jenna and the journey, that was lost.

The audience was very different from the first evening. There was a silence, but grounded-ness to them. They were not as vocal as the first evening's audience (besides an elderly lady who laughed often), but they were invested in the play. They quickly understood and followed the marshalling directions given by Eduan. They seemed more comfortable with the idea of physical audience movement. There was also a shift in the performers – there was a different focus, and they seemed more comfortable. I believe it was because of first-night nerves that had settled down a bit. Abigail summed it up well for me:

“[...] the whole cast said that there was a drop in the energy, but I did not feel it, I must say I did feel more relaxed and in control (regarding nerves, I was not [as] nervous anymore) and I think this is what the cast was confusing with the idea of energy levels being low. I think everyone was just more grounded.”

3.3.3 *Closing Night (22 June 2019)*

For the final show, there was another lighting change. During the two scenes where the astronauts dance with the stars, I asked my lighting technician to add in a blue light (which had reflective properties) because the glow-in-the-dark globes were unsuccessful on both previous evenings. The glow-in-the-dark paint did not charge well and as a result, the stage was extremely dark, and the audience could not see the movements of the actors. The extra lighting helped to lift the performers out of the dark.

Something I did not see, but Abigail mentions in her journal is:

“over all [sic] the run went okay, I do feel like this was not our best show, for example I almost fell when I was on Lindi's shoulders [in Planet X], Jenna's arms kind of gave in

and if Malaika was not there to push me back up, I probably would have landed on Jenna.”

I was concerned that Lindi would once again increase the pace of her sequence. Although Lindi is capable of improvising, I was worried about hollow/empty moments that would take away from her choreographed sequence. I requested that the sound technician shorten her song by another thirty seconds – I felt that if the second song started earlier, and the doomsday sound caught her off-guard, it would be less of a problem than her trying to stretch her piece. Just as I anticipated, it did come as a surprise to her, but worked out well for the final performance.

It was necessary for the show to be performed in front of an audience, without the option to stop and correct a mistake. It is from these performances that we were able to appropriately adjust sound, lighting and performance aspects of the show. There are always changes to be made when changing performance spaces. There are also many changes and ‘mistakes’ that occur when one performs on stage, in front of an audience. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Sometimes nerves or adrenaline affects the performer to such an extent that they perform a move or say a line differently (in a way that was never considered during rehearsals) and the change works for the play better than the initial choice.

I think it was important to give the cast time by themselves before a performance – so that they did not feel their director was ‘breathing down their necks’ – but it was also needed for me to step in and facilitate a few minutes of mindfulness and focus. It calmed nerves, grounded the performers and connected the cast.

We, like *DV8*, only used improvisation during rehearsals to experiment and create material. For the performance, all the choreography was set – each performer knew exactly when and how to move. When something changed during performance (because of various influences such as nerves or a prop malfunction) the performers were able to quickly

improvise their way back to their set choreography. As the performers became more comfortable within their space, the shows became smoother. I could clearly see how the performers were becoming more confident and grounded in their aims, movement and signs. The cast began playing with their characters and fellow characters. The addition of an audience also shifted the focus of the performers, as they became aware that there were many eyes on them. Regular feedback from the cast, crew and audience members, helped streamline the play.

4. Chapter Four: ‘*Mission: Heartstone*’ Script

Below is a documentation of the show in an alternative style script. It mainly documents the SASL and BSL signs that were used throughout the play. I have opted not to describe the movements in much detail. The order and use of signs are more important to me. The movements of the performers can be easily adapted, depending on performer, but the signs define the story and should stay as true as possible.

This script can be used by other performers, should they want to perform *Mission: Heartstone*. It is also an example of a possible manner of scripting a Physical Theatre developed play and Sign Language performance. Should others want to create and document a play (which derives inspiration from Physical Theatre and Sign Language) this would be a possible format to make use of.

There are visual references throughout the script. The actions that are shown in the photos, do not necessarily have to be executed exactly. They merely offer a visual representation of our interpretation of this production.

The script has been formed from my own notes, watching a recording of the play, and from mini scripts some of my performers created for themselves. In the script, I make use of _le (lowered eyebrows) or _re (raises eyebrows), with a question mark afterwards, to indicate the asking of questions. A _neg indicated negation, such as a side to side headshake. If the signs are written next to each other, it represents a sequential dialogue. If the signs are written underneath each other, the signs happen simultaneously between the performers.

Signs: **ABIGAIL**, **CALEB**, **JENNA**, **MAILIKA**, **LASASCELLES**, **LINDI**⁵⁸

MISSION: HEARTSTONE

SCENE 1: TAKE-OFF

Venue: *Foyer and Mezzanine*

Performers: *Malaika, Jenna, Abigail, Lascelles, Lindi and Eduan (technical help)*

Music: *Always With Me, Always With You (Joe Satriani)*

1. Clearance is given – Lindi and Lascelles sit side by side on their knees, with their arms spread like plane wings, in the front of the foyer.
2. Eduan walks in front of the astronauts, creating a clearing in the audience, using two bright orange sticks.
3. Once the space is open, he steps aside. Malaika, Jenna and Abigail are standing in formation.
4. Each astronaut walks forward, speaks (dialogue below), steps forward again to pick up their helmet and then stands to the opposite side of Eduan.

⁵⁸ The signs used will be glossed in English. Each performer has an individual colour to allocate what each signed. If a sign is glossed clean (example: SIGN), the sign is SASL. If the signs are glossed with a * behind it (example: SIGN*) it was learnt as BSL (even if the sign is similar to SASL).

COMMANDER MALAIKA: Commander **CAPTAIN*** Maliaka **M-KPOP**, reporting for duty.

M-KPOP

M-KPOP

My team and I accept Mission: Heartstone **HEARTSTONE**

HEARTSTONE

HEARTSTONE

Together we will brave the treacherous and unfamiliar landscapes of space.

COMMAND PILOT JENNA: Command Pilot **PILOT** Jenna (**J-FLOWER++**), reporting for duty. My team and I accept

(J-FLOWER++)

(J-FLOWER++)

this mission. It is of paramount importance that we search for and successfully retrieve the alleged Heartstone **HEARTSTONE** The precious stone is thought to have the properties

HEARTSTONE

HEARTSTONE

to drastically increase flora growth **FLOWER-GROW** and improve flora resistance to ever-changing virus strains.

FLIGHT ENGINEER ABBY: Flight Engineer **ENGINEER** Abby (**A-dimple**), reporting for duty. My team and I accept this

(A-dimple)

(A-dimple)

mission. Earth can no longer sustain the immense human population **PERSON MANY** – it is dying **DIE** at an exponential rate. Life on another planet is still not possible. As a last result to save Earth **EARTH SAVE**, Mission: Heartstone **HEARTSTONE** will pioneer into deep space

HEARTSTONE

HEARTSTONE

and do everything within our power to retrieve the Heartstone **HEARTSTONE**.

HEARTSTONE

HEARTSTONE



Figure 4. 1

Take-Off: The Astronauts introduce themselves and explain their mission. Command Pilot Jenna signs her sign-name, j-FLOWER++. Commander Malaika and Flight Engineer Abby copy her sign-name.

5. Music with voiceovers commences. While the music/voiceover plays, the performers carry on with their movements.

RED SPARROW: Good morning, Kennedy Tower. This is Red Sparrow.
Requesting start-up and taxi clearance for Mission Heartstone.

KENNEDY TOWER: Red Sparrow, good morning. You are cleared for start-up and taxi for Runway 20 (two-zero). Forecasted

atmospheric conditions are fine. Call when ready for take-off.

RED SPARROW: Kennedy Tower, Red Sparrow is at the holding point 20 (two-zero) and ready for take-off.

KENNEDY TOWER: Red Sparrow, you are cleared for take-off 20 (two-zero). After take-off, proceed as per flight plan Mission Heartstone. Contact Mission Control climbing through flight level 520 (five-two-zero). Wind is 230 (two-three-zero) at 15 (one-five) knots.

RED SPARROW: Red Sparrow rolling.
We are flight level 520 (five-two-zero) and 5 minutes from launching Starcruiser.

MISSION CONTROL: Red Sparrow, you are cleared for launching Starcruiser. Standing by for the count down.

RED SPARROW: Starcruiser, complete final checks before launch, and report ready.

STARCRUISER: All systems checked and functioning. Standing by for launch.

RED SPARROW: Starcruiser, starting countdown at T minus 60 (sixty)....
5, 4, 3, 2, 1 – release.

STARCRUISER: Mission Control, Starcruiser released successfully.
Igniting main rocket engines now. Temperature and pressures is within limits.
Setting up trajectory for deep space.

6. Malaika, Jenna and Abigail salute. Abigail uses the opposite arm to the other two. She quickly corrects herself.
7. Eduan resumes clearing a space between the audience, up to the stairs where he waits (to stop audience members from making their way up prematurely).



Figure 4. 2

Take-off: The Carrier Aircraft assists the spaceship in take-off.

8. Malaika, Jenna and Abigail put their helmets on, and climb into their spacecraft (behind Lascelles and Lindi) **DOOR-OPEN DOOR-CLOSE**. As they take off, they use their vehicle's sign: **ROCKET**

ROCKET

AIRPLANE

AIRPLANE, except for Malaika who is holding the spaceship finger puppet.

9. As they make their way through space, Malaika, Jenna and Abigail produce their astronaut finger puppets. They make a show of handing the puppets to Malaika (she now has all four finger puppets).

10. Jenna and Abigail break away – the roll around each other, back-to-back and hand-to-hand, till they speed off and make their way backstage, through the main theatre and into The Lab without the audience seeing.
 - a. Lascelles and Lindi take Malaika up the first set in the foyer, where they hold both hands, and lower themselves to the ground.
11. Malaika ‘takes off’ a last time, making her way up the steps, travelling with the puppets. She makes her way to the doors which lead to the Lab, beckoning the audience to follow.
 - a. Lascelles and Lindi break away from each other and also make their way backstage, through the main theatre and into The Lab (unseen by audience).
12. Once Malaika is at a safe distance to get backstage quickly, Eduan uses his sticks once again to usher the audience to The Lab.



Figure 4. 3

Take-off: Commander Malaika takes control of all four finger puppets (spaceship, x3 astronauts) and leads the audience upstairs, with the Air Marshaller's assistance.

SCENE 2: MOON GREETING

Venue: *The Lab*

Performers: *Lindi, Malaika, Jenna, Abigail*

Music: *Wizard Of The Stars (Phillip Traum and the Moral Sense)*



Figure 4. 4

Moon Greeting: A pink special/spotlight on Lindi, symbolising her role as a pink Moon.

1. Lindi's moon wakes up and does her first moves: **MOON, MOON.**
2. Astronauts enter with the spaceship pole puppet. They make their way past the moon.
 - a. Lindi jumps on her table: **1, 2, 3 ROCKET-PERSON, HELLO. BEAUTIFUL MOON.**



Figure 4. 5

Moon Greeting: Lindi indicates ROCKET while the Astronauts ascend into space.

3. Jenna and Abigail pick the table up and walk it off stage, while Malaika and Lindi slowly circle the table **GOOD LUCK.**
 - a. Abigail, Jenna and Lindi off-stage.
4. Malaika has a moment of exploration by herself, then makes her way to ‘gather’ the other two astronauts.

SCENE 3: DEPARTURE STAR DANCE

Venue: *The Lab*

Performers: *Malaika, Jenna, Abigail, Lascelles, Lindi*

Music: *Glacier (Celestial Aeon Project)*

1. The astronauts stand centre-centre, in a triangle, with Abigail the back point.
2. Malaika hands Jenna the spaceship pole puppet. **INDEX1 INDEX2++, MILKYWAY AFTER. GALAXY* HERE++.**



Figure 4. 6

Departure Star Dance: The Astronauts admire space – they are past the Milky Way, into the bigger universe.

They admire the stars.

3. STAR++ STAR++ STAR++
STAR++ CONSTELLATION * LOOK STAR++ CONSTELLATION * LOOK
STAR++
STAR++ STAR++ STAR

4. Lascelles and Lindi enter with pole stars – astronauts observe.
 - a. Stationary for 5 beats.
 - b. Slow moves for 5 beats.
 - c. Moving for 5 beats.
5. Performers divide and jam with the stars (Lindi and Abigail / Malaika, Jenna and Lascelles)
 - a. Rapid star movements FAST++ FAST++ FAST++
 - b. Stars slow down
 - c. Star poles are passed on among jamming partners



Figure 4. 7

Departure Star Dance: Malaika handles the space shuttle rod puppet.

6. Lascelles and Lindi take their poles back and make their way off-stage
 - a. The astronauts regroup and also go backstage.



Figure 4. 8

Departure Star Dance: The Astronauts dance among the stars.

SCENE 4: PLANET X

Venue: *The Lab*

Performers: *Malaika, Jenna, Abigail, Lascelles, Lindi and Caleb*

Music: *Volcano - Dawn of War (Jeremy Soule)*

1. Lascelles, Caleb and Lindi enter the space, they block themselves at different levels and angles. In their own time, they complete a sequence of signs.

TERRAIN*, SOIL, DROUGHT*, HOT, WARM, VOLCANO* x3 CLAW

TERRAIN*, SOIL, DROUGHT*, HOT, WARM, VOLCANO* x3 CLAW

TERRAIN*, SOIL, DROUGHT*, HOT, WARM, VOLCANO* x3 CLAW



Figure 4. 9

Planet X: The planet performers begin introducing the planet. From left to right: WARM, DROUGHT, DROUGHT*.*



Figure 4. 10

Planet X: Each planet performers signs at their own speed. From left to right: zombie-bush, VOLCANO, VOLCANO.

2. As each planet-performer finishes their sequence, they roll into a neutral space, where they create a 'zombie' plant (their hands end in the CLAW shape).
3. Astronauts enter the space and land close to the 'zombie' plant: **ROCKET ROCKET** and Malaika holds the spaceship finger puppet.
 - a. Malaika switches things off in the cockpit.
 - b. Abigail nervously looks around.
 - c. **NEW PLANET**
4. **DOOR-OPEN**. The astronauts exit the spaceship, to find a strong force of gravity. **DOOR-CLOSE**. They make their way to the 'zombie' plant, while helping each other through the gravity by pulling each other, till they get used to the gravity.
5. Jenna spots the 'zombie' plant. **INDEX1 LOOK PLANT++ HEARTSTONE YES**
YES
6. **INDEX1 LOOK AREA++ YES**

YES

7. Malaika walks off to a side, looking out into the distance. HOT, SWEAT.
 - a. Abigail helps Jenna look at the ‘zombie’ plant. c-u, HEARTSTONE NOT.



Figure 4. 11

Planet X: Command Pilot Jenna and Flight Engineer Abby look at the plant-rock hybrid for the Heartstone.

Jenna signs c (c-u) to indicate she only finds copper.

8. Jenna starts walking away from the copper plant, Abigail sits down on the plant.
 - a. The plant starts rising up, and Abigail is lifted into the air.
 - b. Malaika and Jenna notice and run to her aid.
9. EARTHQUAKE++ EARTHQUAKE++ EARTHQUAKE++ Jenna and Malaika catch Abigail.



Figure 4. 12

Planet X: Flight Engineer Abby is raised from the ground.

10. The planet-performers move into their first rock-formation/cave position.

a. INDEX2 ROCKET-PERSON BAD SORRY WORRIED

11. Malaika spots the rock-formation, tries to push the rocks away INDEX2 THROUGH
_neg, HARD.

a. She shrugs and indicates they must go through the cave GO.



Figure 4. 13

Planet X: The Astronauts make their way through the cave tunnel. Commander Malaika shows COME.

12. The astronauts make their way one-by-one through the cave. As one astronaut goes through, one planet-performer changes their position to create a new structure to go through. Each astronaut goes through two of their own structures, all of them go through the last structure: 7 structures in total.

- a. During one structure, that Abigail goes through, there are two 'holes'
 - i. Abigail shouts, it bounces through one hole: ECHO* ECHO*
ECHO*++
 - ii. Malaika shouts back: ECHO* ECHO*++. Abigail goes through.
- b. During the last structure, Malaika goes through first. INDEX2++ INDEX1
PUSH.



Figure 4. 14

Planet X: The Astronauts carry on their journey through the cave.

13. The three astronauts exit the cave, entering a new place on the planet.

14. DARK/STORMY-CLOUD++

DARK/STORMY-CLOUD++

DARK/STORMY-CLOUD++

15. The planet-performers start shaking: EARTHQUAKE++

EARTHQUAKE++

EARTHQUAKE++

16. Little 'zombie' plants grab the astronauts (Caleb grabs Malaika / Lascelles grabs Jenna)

a. Lindi rolls in one place

17. Abigail helps Malaika escape, then the two help Malaika escape 2HELP1

a. As the plants are freed up, they sit together at different angles, and sign

LIVE HERE ++

LIVE HERE ++

LIVE HERE ++

18. The astronauts regroup HEARTSTONE NOT, INDEX1-INDEX2++ GO BAD

DANGEROUS

DANGEROUS

19. The planet-performers create a volcano with their bodies, using different appropriate signs: MAGNA* VOLCANO VOLCANO

MAGMA-CHAMBER* VOLCANIC-ERUPTION VOLCANIC-ERUPTION

LAVA* LAVA* LAVA*

20. Malaika struggles to put the password in on the keypad. DOOR-OPEN, FAST++, COME, the astronauts jump into their spaceship, DOOR-CLOSE, and Jenna and Abigail take off with a ROCKET ROCKET hand.

- a. While the astronauts are trying to get away, the planet-performers imitate lava and use sighs such as YELLOW RED ORANGE as they flow.

YELLOW RED ORANGE

YELLOW RED ORANGE

21. Astronauts exit. Again, the planet-performers sit near to each other, different angles and levels, with different speeds, signing their sequence. After one time going through the sequence stationary, they walk off, continuing signing.

TERRAIN*, SOIL, DROUGHT*, HOT, WARM, VOLCANO* x

TERRAIN*, SOIL, DROUGHT*, HOT, WARM, VOLCANO* x

TERRAIN*, SOIL, DROUGHT*, HOT, WARM, VOLCANO* x

SCENE 5: THE JENNA

Venue: The Lab

Performers: Malaika, Jenna, Abigail, Lascelles, Lindi and Caleb

Music: Crystal Echoes (Sergey Cheremisinov)

1. The astronauts enter the space. Malaika angrily looks at Abigail, then looks away.

SORRY.

- a. Jenna feels the tension between the two. She sees Abigail is upset. **HOW-ARE-YOU _re? FINE. PILOT INDEX2-WATCH-INDEX1. SPEED-OF-SOUND*.**



Figure 4. 15

The Jenna: Command Pilot Jenna asks HOW-ARE-YOU, to which Flight Engineer Abby replies FINE.

Commander Malaika is unhappy with the events that transpired on Planet X.

2. The astronauts continue to create images, while Jenna uses the spaceship finger puppet. The performers assist Jenna in her exploration of the flying ship.



Figure 4. 16

The Jenna: Command Pilot Jenna controls the spaceship finger puppet.

3. Lindi joins, as part of the 'air'.



Figure 4. 17

The Jenna: The Astronauts are joined by a space performer.

4. Caleb joins, as part of the 'air'.

5. Lascelles joins, as part of the ‘air’.
 - a. A black cloth is lowered from the roof (the foreshadowing of the blackhole) – not touching the ground. It is quickly pulled back up.



Figure 4. 18

The Jenna: All the performers are on stage. From the top right, the blackhole cloth is slowly lowered.

6. As the sequence ends, the air-performers exit off-stage, while the astronauts regroup and go off-stage.

SCENE 6: PLANET SLINKY

Venue: *The Lab*

Performers: *Malaika, Jenna, Abigail, Lascelles, Lindi and Caleb*

Music: *La Lune (Cirque Du Soleil), followed by Créature De Siam (Cirque Du Soleil)*

1. Caleb curls up on stage with a neon slinky.
 - a. Lascelles and Lindi take on six helium balloons and lay them down near Caleb.

- b. Lindi and Lascelles lie next to Caleb with a medium neon slinky of their own.
2. The astronauts land on Planet Slinky, Malaika lowering herself with the spaceship finger puppet, while the other two **ROCKET ROCKET** hands.
3. Malaika switches off buttons.
 - a. Abigail looks around excitedly.
 - b. **NEW PLANET**
4. **DOOR-OPEN**. Malaika gets out of the spaceship first and bounces a few times.
5. Malaika indicates BOUNCY.
6. Jenna exits, and bounces just short of Malaika. **DOOR-CLOSE**.
7. Abigail joins the other two. They have a constant bounce in their step as the surface of Planet Slinky is extremely bouncy.



Figure 4. 19

Planet Slinky: The Astronauts begin exploring the bouncy planet.

8. Abigail notices the three planet-performers and makes a move to touch them. Malaika sternly intervenes. **NO++ _neg. SORRY.**

9. Malaika and Abigail walk off behind each other, but Jenna lingers behind. She gently touches one of the planet-performers.
10. The touch makes the touched plant 'eek' and all the plants roll.
 - a. Malaika and Abigail hear an odd sound.
 - b. Jenna runs to catch up to the other astronauts, pretending she did nothing.
11. Just as Jenna is lined up with the other astronauts, Malaika turns to Abigail in question, and Abigail turns to Jenna in question. Jenna to **DON'T-KNOW** Abigail, Abigail **DON'T-KNOW** to Malaika and Malaika, scrutinising the two, turns to continue exploring and signs **DON'T-KNOW**.



Figure 4. 20

Planet Slinky: Commander Malaika is sceptical as to whether the other Astronauts are behaving themselves.

12. As Malaika and Abigail continue looking, Jenna once again curiously goes to a planet-performer and touches them. They 'eek' and give a roll.
13. Malaika and Abigail this time turn around to see Jenna by the strange 'plant'.
14. Jenna excitedly point to the 'plant' and goes to touch it a third time, **INDEX2-LOOK-INDEX3**.

a. Malaika and Abigail run to stop her. NO NO NO

NO NO NO

15. As the third 'eek' sounds, the three plants get up and spin their slinkies to ward off the astronauts.

16. Astronauts back off to a side, while the animals run off-stage, ANIMAL.

17. Abigail tries to run after the animals, but Malaika pulls her back. NO _neg,

HEARTSTONE, WORK NOW.

18. Abigail and Jenna look over to each other, Jenna shows to Abigail that Malaika is always complaining by signing COMPLAIN,

INDEX2 COMPLAIN YES.

19. Lindi comes on from a side, with a slinky attached to her ponytail and her toes. She slides on her bottom, making her way from one side of the stage to the other. She is an animal on the planet.

a. The astronauts notice. ANIMAL WHAT _le? CUTE! CUTE! SMALL.

20. Caleb and Lascelles run in and do a cartwheel (animals) over each other.

21. INDEX2 FAMILY? FAMILY. CUTE. NO _neg. CUTE. NO _neg. CUTE. YES.

22. The planet-performers (now animals) group together to create a pack. They each have a slinky lined from one hand, over the shoulders, to the other hand. They greet each other, and then sniff something in the air. SMELL.

SMELL.

SMELL.

23. The pack runs after the astronauts. GO! The astronauts run away, thinking the animals want to eat them.

24. Jenna trips. Caleb bounces to her and grabs her helmet off.

- a. Malaika and Abigail make their way to the spaceship, trying to get it. Abigail tries to get Malaika's attention to show her Jenna has been left behind.
 - b. Lindi and Lascelles fetch three balloons. They promptly give Caleb one.
25. Caleb gives a balloon to Jenna, shows her to breathe it in.
26. Jenna breathes the air in and finds she can breathe without her helmet. **HELMET _re?**
- THANK YOU.**
- a. Lindi and Lascelles sit in front of Malaika and Abigail, offering them too balloons.



Figure 4. 21

Planet Slinky: The animals on the planet grab balloons for the Astronauts, as the substance in them will help the astronauts to breathe without the help of their helmets.

27. Once Jenna makes her way back to the other astronauts, she shows **BREATHE**, the astronauts take the balloons and breathe in the contents of the balloons. The astronauts realise the animals are friendly.
28. Each animal shows a different version of play. **PLAY**

PLAY

PLAY

- a. The astronauts nod. Malaika still standoffish.
29. The planet-performers now transform into an animal with a slinky for a tail. They bounce to the edge of the stage, encouraging the astronauts to follow their bounces.
30. The animals bounce backwards, and halfway across the stage turn and run off-stage.
- a. The astronauts continue bouncing till the opposite end of the stage.
31. **LOOK. YES.** The animals come back on, with the Slinky King (over 26 hoola-hoops that have been connected to each other). **INDEX2-LOOK-INDEX3!**
32. As the planet-performers neatly roll out the Slinky King into a tunnel, the astronauts describe what they see (repetitively): **COLOURFUL GREEN ORANGE PINK**
- i. **WHAT _le? LONG PURPLE GREEN BLUE**
- BIG**

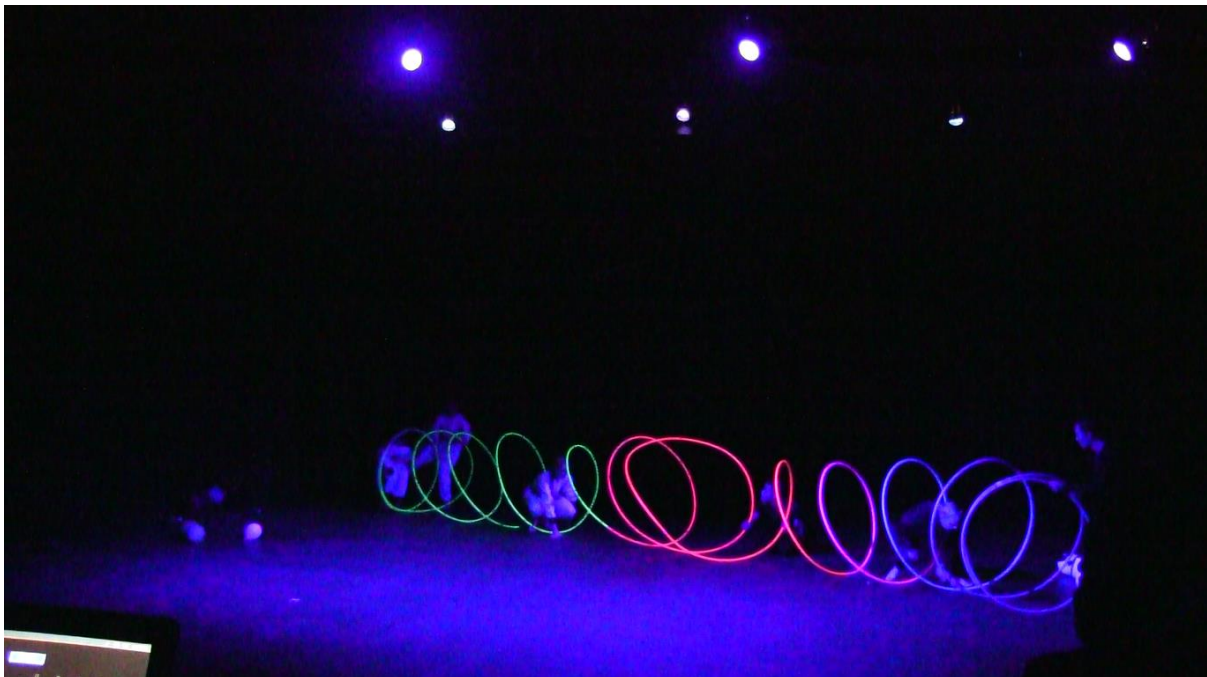


Figure 4. 22

Planet Slinky: A giant slinky is brought on stage for the animals and Astronauts to play with.

33. Lindi indicates the astronauts must follow her. She goes though the Slinky King tunnel first.

34. The performers put it down, and Lindi gathers it up as she goes through the Slinky King tunnel one last time.

35. **CONFUSING. FUNNY. NO _neg. WORK NOW.**

a. **HEARTSTONE HERE NOT. FUNNY. PLAY. FRIENDS. NO _neg, GO.**

36. Second song starts. The planet-performers enter again, this time with small fluorescent bouncy balls. There is a moment where the planet-performers (animals) show off the balls, putting the ball on the top of their hand (palm facing down).

a. They group together, three in the middle and three opposite (Lindi with Malaika, Abigail with Lascelles, Jenna with Caleb).

37. They play a ballgame with each other.



Figure 4. 23

Planet Slinky: The animals bring on bouncy balls.

38. All the performers, except Lindi, go to the ground at the end of the sequence and hold the small ball up.

a. Lindi jumps over them one by one to collect all the balls.
b. As a ball is collected, the performers quickly sit up to see what's happening.

39. Malaika begins walking to the spaceship. **COME** to Abigail.
40. Abigail follows. Malaika puts in the password for the spaceship on the keypad.
- DOOR-OPEN.**
- a. Lascelles sees the astronauts are leaving and grabs three more balloons.
41. Jenna gets up to go to the spaceship.
- a. Lascelles gives a balloon to each planet-performer. They run to the spaceship.
- b. They give the astronauts an extra balloon each for their travel. Helmets go on.
42. Lascelles is upset. **SAD. CRY.** She runs off. The astronauts get into the spaceship.
- THANK-YOU FRIEND. SAD. THANK YOU. DOOR-CLOSE. SAD.**
43. The astronauts take-off, Malaika with the spaceship finger puppet, and the other two **ROCKET ROCKET** hands.
44. When the astronauts exit, Caleb and Lindi run off-stage.

SCENE 7: BLACKHOLE

Venue: *The Lab*

Performers: *Malaika, Jenna, Abigail, Lindi and Caleb*

Music: *1 Hour of Black Hole (YouTube), layered with Nadir (Austin Wintory)*

1. A long black cloth slowly descends from the roof.
2. Caleb enters with a rostrum, followed by Lindi with a rostrum – they walk in using straight lines, line themselves up and place their rostra down.
3. They move to the piece of material (dangling) and observe it – gently touching it.



Figure 4. 24

Blackhole: The blackhole cloth is lowered from the same place. The blackhole twins circle the cloth.

4. Lindi pulls the material down.
5. Caleb and Lindi each take a side of the material and position themselves by their rostra (Lindi leaning over her rostrum on her back, and Caleb leaning against his while sitting on the floor).
6. A moment of stillness.
7. Caleb slowly ‘awakes’ and begins to pull Lindi up, by pulling on the material.



Figure 4. 25

Blackhole: After sitting, one side of the blackhole awakens.

8. The two begin their moving sequence – pulling the material and fighting for control.
 - a. Some moves are mirrored, such as lifting their legs in the air, or grabbing at something in the same direction.
9. Caleb leans with his back onto Lindi's back and slowly shows **DANGEROUS**.
10. Lindi leans with her back onto Caleb's back and slowly shows **DANGEROUS**.



Figure 4. 26

Blackhole: the blackhole twins take turns pushing the other over, signing DANGEROUS.

11. Lindi lets go of the material and gives a roll forward.
 - a. Caleb stands up and neatens the material out.
12. Lindi takes a couple of steps backwards, and signs **BLACK++** with alternating hands.
 - a. Caleb meets Lindi.



Figure 4. 27

Blackhole: Stepping backwards, the sign BLACK is repeated.

13. Caleb throws the material around Lindi's front, and Lindi falls forward in the material (while Caleb holds the material tight).
 - a. Cue the addition of *Austin Wintory* song.
14. Caleb pulls Lindi up with the material, then she proceeds to fall backwards.
 - a. Caleb catches her.
15. They both pull the material out (as far as the material can go in length), then stare each other down as they try accumulating as much material as each can.
 - a. They meet in the middle of their performing area – they stare at each other and drop the material.
16. **BLACKHOLE***
BLACKHOLE*



Figure 4. 28

Blackhole: In a moment of agreement, the blackhole twins sign BLACKHOLE, while staring into each other's eyes.*

17. They take the material, straighten it out in a movement sequence.
18. They run around the rostra with a sequence.
 - a. On Lindi's final run around the upstage rostrum, the astronauts enter (helmets on).
 - i. Astronauts laughing. Malaika has the spaceship puppet.
 - ii. Malaika sees something is not right, **ALARM*** ++.
 - iii. Jenna sees Malaika is stressing, **ALARM*** ++.
19. Caleb does a final run around the upstage rostrum. **ALARM*** ++.
20. The astronauts are sucked out of their spaceship. Malaika drops the spaceship puppet: **DOOR-OPEN**.



Figure 4. 29

Blackhole: The Astronauts are ripped from their spaceship

21. Caleb and Lindi start another sequence – where the material's ends are joined to create a circle-like shape.
 - a. Astronauts are sucked behind the material: **BLACKHOLE***, **BLACKHOLE***, **BLACKHOLE***.
22. The astronauts fight for their freedom.
23. **INDEX3 INDEX2 3HELP2. ROCKET INDEX1 GO. YES.**
24. Malaika struggles to get the spaceship.
 - a. Jenna tries to save Abigail.
25. Jenna pushes Abigail to safety. She gets stuck in the blackhole.
 - a. Malaika gets the spaceship.



Figure 4. 30

Blackhole: Jenna is sucked in by the force of the blackhole.

26. Malaika stands on upstage rostrum, spaceship in one hand. Slowly spins around.
 - a. Abigail sits on downstage rostrum. Slowly spins around.
 - b. Jenna is consumed by the blackhole – Caleb and Lindi catch her (as they do this, they remove Jenna's helmet).
27. Jenna's helmet falls to the floor, as the blackhole swallows her.
 - a. Jenna is wrapped in the black material – cannot see body/face – and she is carried offstage.
 - b. The helmet is left floating alone on the floor (it did not get sucked up with Jenna by the blackhole).
28. Malika sees Jenna's helmet floating by itself and rushes to get it.
 - a. Abigail waves frantically at Malaika. **HELLO. 2HELP1 _re? 2HELP1!**
29. Malaika sees Abigail – she takes the rostrum she stood on and meets up with Abigail. **DOOR-OPEN.**
 - a. Abigail gets in. **DOOR-CLOSE.**

30. The two look at Jenna's helmet.
31. They sadly both exit, with the rostra they used.
32. Lascelles enters past the astronauts – drawing the attention back to her. She gently makes her way to her position.

SCENE 8: CLEO – SUMMER

Venue: *The Lab*

Performers: *Lascelles*

Music: *Mother's Hands (Sergey Cheremisinov)*

1. Waking up: **CLEAR, NEW-DAY, VINES, SUMMER, WARM.**



Figure 4. 31

Cleo – Summer: Cleo awakens for summer, with CLEAR.



Figure 4. 32

Cleo – Summer: a NEW DAY.

2. GREEN to one side, GREEN to the opposite side.
3. After her sequence on the ground, she stands up: FLOWER++, BLUE, RED, PURPLE, GREEN.



Figure 4. 33

Cleo – Summer: Cleo looks at the flowers on her home planet.

4. **HEARTBEAT, STONE, SPARKLE**, twirls, incorporating making her arms create vine shapes.
5. Running to one corner, she goes to the ground: **BREATH, GROW, VINES**.
6. Running to another corner, she shows: **BREATHE, GROW FLOWER++**.
7. Running to another corner, she signs: **BREATHE, GROW, LEAF++**, and using her toes as an anchor for another **LEAF**.
8. She goes to centre stage and twirls around, looking at the sky.

SCENE 9: 1ST ENCOUNTER - CLEO & SUPERNOVA

Venue: *The Lab*

Performers: *Lascelles and Caleb*

Music: *Fukushima Night (Fabio Keiner)*

1. Caleb enters, rolling his way to Lascelles.
2. Lascelles sees Caleb, stops spinning, and indicates **STOP** to him.
3. Caleb stands, they stand square on.
4. The two circle each other: **DANGER ENERGY*++**
EMERGED*++
5. About 4 feet from Lascelles, a forceful **STOP**.
6. They stand next to each other and begin a movement sequence.



Figure 4. 34

1st Encounter – Cleo & Supernova: Cleo and the Supernova meet for the first time. She outpowers him.

7. After Caleb tries to grab Lascelles's arm to overpower her, Lascelles sits on his shoulders and the two twirl around.
8. Caleb throws Lascelles off.
9. They slowly back towards each other: Caleb behind Lascelles.
10. **POWERFUL**
- STRONG**
11. The two create a final fight move, till Lascelles pushes Caleb away with **GO**.
12. Caleb rolls off, while Lascelles watches.
13. CALM. HEARTSTONE SAFE.
14. She looks up. STARS. NIGHT.
15. Sitting down in her starting position, **SLEEP DARK**.

SCENE 10: CLEO – WINTER

Venue: The Lab

Performers: Lascelles

Music: Labyrinth (Sergey Cheremisinov)

1. On the ground, waking up: FROZEN, NEW-DAY, COLD, ICE
2. GREY left hand, GREY right hand.
3. RAIN ++ facing one way, HAIL++ facing the opposite way.



Figure 4. 35

Cleo – Winter: Cleo looks to the sky as she sees RAIN.

4. After the floor sequence above, she stands for a new movement sequence.



Figure 4. 36

Cleo – Winter: Cleo has few movements which allow her extremities far from her core (during her planet's winter).

5. **WHITE, COLD, FLOWER, GREY, CLOUDY**
6. She makes her way to her starting position again.
7. **COLD, DARK, SLEEP.**

SCENE 11: PLANET HEARSTONE

Venue: *The Lab*

Performers: *Lascelles Malaika and Abigail*

Music: *Mother's Hands (Sergey Cheremisinov) followed by Drown In Mirrors (Sergey Cheremisinov)*

1. Waking up: **CLEAR, NEW-DAY, VINES, SUMMER, WARM.**
2. **GREEN** to one side, **GREEN** to the opposite side.
 - a. Malaika and Abigail enter. Malaika has the finger puppet.

3. After her sequence on the ground, she stands up: FLOWER++, BLUE, RED, PURPLE, GREEN.
 - a. The astronauts land – Abigail showing ROCKET as she lowers herself to the ground.
 - b. PLANET NEW
4. Lascelles stops her sequence and shows HEAR.
5. DOOR-OPEN. The astronauts silently get out of the spaceship – the finger puppets are used.
 - a. NEW WHAT _le? WHAT _le?
6. HEARTSTONE SEARCH.
NEW WHAT _le? HIDE (Lascelles hides from the astronauts).



Figure 4. 37

Planet Heartstone: The Astronauts arrive on Planet Heartstone. Cleo is watching the new beings, and shows HIDE to indicate she is hiding.

7. Astronauts move away from their spaceship. Lascelles inspects the spaceship, and accidentally knocks it over. She quickly runs away to HIDE.



Figure 4. 38

Planet Heartstone: as the two Astronauts explore the planet (as their puppets), Cleo explores the spaceship, accidentally knocking it over.

8. Abigail looks back and sees the spaceship knocked over.
 - a. She grabs Malaika's attention and pulls her towards the spaceship.
 - b. Malaika tries picking the spaceship up (in puppet form) – does not work.
 - c. Abigail tries picking the spaceship up (in puppet form) – does not work.
 - d. Together they try to pick up the spaceship (in puppet form) – does not work.
9. They get up, defeated.
10. As the astronauts look around, Lascelles looks at them curiously. **LOOK. LOOK. HIDE.**
11. Lascelles comes out of hiding to interact with Abigail, while Malaika still looks around. **NEW WHAT _le? HELLO. HELLO. FRIEND _re? PLAY _re? YES.**
12. Lascelles and Abigail have a moment of jamming.



Figure 4. 39

Planet Heartstone: Cleo plays with Flight Engineer Abby

13. Malaika sees the two and quickly rushes to Abigail to protect her – she pushes Lascelles away.
14. Lascelles twirls and pulls Abigail back so that the pair can continue jamming.
 - a. Malaika watches on, curiously. She notices the stone on/in Lascelles's chest. She realizes what it is.
15. Malaika again quickly rushes to pull Abigail away.
16. To a side: RED ROCKET-PERSON FAVOURITE. BLUE ROCKET-PERSON DISLIKE.
17. To a side between the astronauts: INDEX3 HEARTSTONE HAVE. WHAT _le?
18. NO _neg.
19. YES. INDEX2 HEARTTONE HAVE, CHEST. STEAL.
20. NO _neg, ASK.
21. Abigail marches to Lascelles, who is now sitting. She begins explaining to Lascelles.

- a. HELLO. SIGN-NAME POSS1 A-cheek. A-cheek.
- b. SIGN-NAME POSS3 M-kpop_heart.
 - i. Lascelles turns slightly away, clearly not interested in Malaika.
- c. 2HELP1. INDEX2 HEARTSTONE HAVE _re?
- d. WHAT _le? DIAMOND _re?



Figure 4. 40

Planet Heartstone: Flight Engineer asks Cleo if she has the Heartstone. Cleo does not know what she is referring to.

22. Malaika intervenes – they are all on the floor now. PLANET EARTH* POSS1 DYING. DYING. HOME DYING.

- a. Lascelles makes a roof gesture. Then pats the ground. YES. DYING.
- b. Malaika points to her own chest – as if saying ‘that thing in your chest’.
 - i. Lascelles looks at Malaika’s chest.
- c. Malaika shakes her head, _neg. She points to Lascelles chest area (at a bit of a distance).
 - i. Lascelles looks at the tip of Malaika’s finger. WHAT _le?

- d. Malaika, getting more frustrated, points violently to the Heartstone in Lascelles's chest, and suddenly grabs for it.

23. The two have a fighting moment.

- a. Lascelles lifts Malaika by her throat 'off the ground' – Abigail tries to intervene, but Lascelles pushes her away with a foot.
- b. Lascelles lowers Malaika to the ground and glares down to her.
- c. Abigail comes back and begs **PLEASE++**.
- d. Lascelles throws Malaika back and quickly goes back to her initial position on the ground, where she started her summer/winter season sequences. While walking **FURIOUS**.



Figure 4. 41

Planet Heartstone: Flight Engineer Abby begs Cleo not to harm Commander Malaika, after Malaika attempts to steal the Heartstone

24. Abigail checks that Malaika is okay. She looks angrily at Malaika. **WHAT _le?**

25. Abigail gets up, walks to Lascelles. She looks back and signs to Malaika **WAIT**.

NO _neg.

26. Abigail taps on Lascelles shoulder once: no response.

27. Abigail taps on Lascelles shoulder twice: Lascelles shifts to a slight angle away from Abigail.
28. Abigail taps on Lascelles shoulder three times: Lascelles jumps up **FURIOUS**.
29. **SORRY. SORRY**. Lascelles is still not satisfied. **FURIOUS**.
30. **2TELL1 SORRY NOW**.
31. **NO _neg**. Malaika does not want to.
32. **NOW**.
33. Malaika kneels down next to Abigail, **SORRY**.
34. **PLEASE, 2HELP1 _re?**
35. There is a moment of quiet. Lascelles calms down. She looks to the astronauts, taking everything in.
36. **PLANET POSS2 DIE _re**. Astronauts nod. **YES**.
YES.
37. **INDEX2** (to Abigail) **DIE _re?**
38. **YES**.
39. **HEARTSTONE 1HELP2 _re?**
40. Lascelles looks to her chest. She makes a decision. **2LOOK1**.
41. Lascelles gets up, twirls. **BLOW** in the centre of the stage. Malaika and Abigail follow to where she stands.
 - a. Caleb slowly makes his way on stage (drawing as little attention to himself as possible) to his starting position for the next scene.
42. (F-hand) **FLOWER++**.
FLOWER++. **FLOWER++**.
43. The astronauts rejoice – it's what they were looking for.

44. Lascelles looks at the astronauts. She gently takes Malaika's hand and extends it towards her. She then takes Abigail's hand and does the same (Abigail's hand on top of Malaika's).

a. Lascelles places the Heartstone into Abigail's hand – and then closes the astronauts' hands around the Heartstone.

b. **PROTECT. YES. THANK-YOU!**

YES. THANK-YOU!



Figure 4. 42

Planet Heartstone: Cleo tells the Astronauts to PROTECT the Heartstone. Left, the Supernova is advancing closer and becoming more and more dangerous (though unseen by Cleo and the astronauts).*

45. Abigail looks over to the spaceship, points and then to Lascelles **2HELP1,**
PLEASE _re? SORRY!

a. Caleb begins slowly his movement sequence – slow, and low on the ground.

46. The three get up and go to the spaceship.

47. Lascelles picks the spaceship up. **THANK-YOU!**

48. Malaika to Lascelles: HEARTSTONE WORK HOW _le?
49. Lascelles shows them BLOW and f-hand FOWER++.
50. Abigail coaxes Malaika to blow. BLOW, FLOWER++, FLOWER++.
 - a. Lascelles feels Caleb's presence. DANGER. She turns around to see him stirring: he uses SUN, DIE and GRAVITY in his sequence.
51. Caleb's movement continues – the supernova grows in strength.
52. INDEX3. DANGEROUS. GO. WHAT _le? GO!
53. Malaika looks at what Lascelles is pointing to – she sees the supernova, and grabs Abigail's hand and tries to open the spaceship. She types in the password of the keypad. DOOR-OPEN.
54. Lascelles pushes Abigail in: Abigail begs Lascelles COME++.
55. Lascelles cannot. DANGEROUS. NO _neg, DANGER GO NOW.
56. DOOR-CLOSE. Astronauts put their helmets on.



Figure 4. 43

Planet Heartstone: Cleo urges the Astronauts to leave.

57. Lascelles gives the spaceship/astronauts an extra push – they quickly take off (Malaika with the spaceship finger puppet, and Abigail with **ROCKET**).
- a. Abigail gives a quick look back.
 - b. The astronauts zoom off-stage.

SCENE 12: 2ND ENCOUNTER – CLEO & SUPERNOVA

Venue: *The Lab*

Performers: *Lascelles and Caleb*

Music: *Fukushima Night (Fabio Keiner)*

1. Lascelles slowly backs towards Caleb – feeling his strength pull her in.
2. The two begin their movement sequence: each once slowly, and heavily, moving towards the other, still they are shoulder to shoulder (backs to audience)
3. Caleb's movements become increasingly aggressive in their sequence.
 - a. They perform a number of weight-giving moves, and lifts.
4. Lascelles attempts to run away, Caleb grabs in her direction and the two have a moment of freezing (Caleb in a lunge-like position, Lascelles upright and leaning forward).



Figure 4. 44

2nd Encounter – Cleo & Supernova: Cleo attempts to run away. The lighting becomes red.

5. Lascelles is slowly pulled in again.
6. There is a ‘punching scene’ where the punches, instead of fists, are created using signs. There are three punches from Caleb, and three blocks from Lascelles.

SUN SUN SUN

VINE VINE VINE

7. Lascelles pumps on Caleb’s shoulders again. She attempts to do STRONG, but Caleb throws her off.



Figure 4. 45

2nd Encounter – Cleo & Supernova: The final battle begins. The lighting, green and red, symbolises the power of the characters.

8. Lascelles tries running away in a semi-circle.
 - a. Caleb **NOVA*++** in a semi-circle.
9. When the semi-circle is complete, Caleb makes a big **SUPERNOVA***, which throws Lascelles balance.
10. Lascelles looks at Caleb and decides on her last attack.
11. She runs to Caleb, who picks her up (vertically, creating more length). Her arm one arm in the air.
12. Caleb squeezes her – she gasps for air.



Figure 4. 46

2nd Encounter – Cleo & Supernova: Cleo's last attack, as the Supernova devours her.

- a. Slowly she pulls down – dying.
13. Caleb brings her to the ground and wraps his body over hers (obscuring her from the audience).
14. Lascelles hand slowly descends (dead).
15. A few moments pass.
16. Caleb stands up and picks Lascelles up. He carries her off-stage.

SCENE 13: RETURN - FLASHLIGHT

Venue: *The Lab*

Performers: *Malaika and Abigail*

Music: *Crystal Echoes (Sergey Cheremisinov)*

1. Abigail and Malaika re-enter the space – they make their way to centre stage.
 - a. Abigail is controlling the spaceship finger puppet now.

2. They hover.
 - a. Malaika holds the Heartstone in front of her and looks at it.
3. The astronauts, though signing to the front, are communicating to each other.
4. **HEARTSTONE HAVE.**



Figure 4. 47

Return – Flashlight: Commander Malaika and Flight Engineer Abby admire the Heartstone, before they head back home.

5. **SUCCESS.**
6. **HOME GO.**
7. All the lights go off. Malaika produces a little flashlight.
8. As Abigail controls the spaceship finger puppet, Malaika moves with Abigail to shine the light on the puppet.
9. After a brief ‘flight’, the astronauts make their way to the side of the stage – here they meet up with Jenna (in basic black).

SCENE 14: RETURN STAR DANCE

Venue: *The Lab*

Performers: *Malaika, Jenna, Abigail and Lindi*

Music: *Crystal Echoes (Sergey Cheremisinov)*

1. After a brief ‘flight’, the astronauts make their way to the side of the stage – here they meet up with Jenna (in basic black).
 - a. Jenna is controlling the two star poles.
2. The three of them have a moment of movement: the two astronauts dance between the stars.
 - a. Jenna at first moves slowly, then quickly with the stars. **STAR++**.
STAR++.
3. After their jam, they all make their way again to the same side of the stage where Jenna entered from.
 - a. Abigail and Malaika go off-stage.
 - b. Jenna continues to move the stars.
4. Slowly, Jenna starts moving back on the stage and makes her way to the other side of the stage (to go off-stage).
 - a. Lindi (in her Moon costume) jams with Jenna as she moves (till about centre stage).
 - b. Abigail and Malaika carry on a table behind Lindi and place it in position.
5. Once Lindi’s table is in position, she turns away from the stars and makes her way to her table.
 - a. Abigail and Jenna make their way back to Jenna, and the three of them jam their way off-stage further.



Figure 4. 48

Return Star Dance: As the Astronauts help bring on the Moon's table, the Moon gently jams with the stars.

SCENE 15: MOON

Venue: *The Lab*

Performers: *Lindi, Malaika, Abigail and Eduan.*

Music: *Chapter 1 – Lament Of The Shadow Elves (Peter Gundry), Destroyer Of Worlds (Rok Nardi), Quiet Resource (Evelyn Steine)*

1. Peter Gungry's song plays. Lindi is asleep on the table. Her head is on her hands that are signing **ASLEEP**.
2. She starts waking up, putting both feet up in the air, she does a **MOON** stretch to the one side, then a **MOON** stretch to the other side.
3. She rolls off the table, **BRIGHT**. Stretches some more.
 - a. She stands up, arches her back with hands stretched out in front of her.



Figure 4. 49

Moon: The Moon wakes up and stretches.

4. She pulls out her **TELESCOPE*** and looks through it.



Figure 4. 50

Moon: The Moon takes out her TELESCOPE and starts observing her neighbour, Earth.*

5. She sees **DRAGONFLY**.
 - a. She creates a sequence, using her hands to fly the **DRAGONFLY** around.

- b. After the **DRAGONFLY** flies, she describes its **EYES- BIG** and **RED**, **GREEN** body and **WINGS** – using the signs within her movements.
- c. She again creates movements to indicate the dragonfly flying.



Figure 4. 51

Moon: The Moon begins imitating a dragonfly.



Figure 4. 52

Moon: This is the only character who uses a table in the play. Her lighting has a tinge of pink.

6. She takes out her **TELESCOPE*** again and looks.
7. She sees **RAIN**.
8. In a sequence, she signs: **RAIN, WEATHER, RAIN, EVAPORATION***, **RAIN**, movement, **RAIN, RIVER, RIVER-FILLS-UP**.
9. She does a roll, with a backwards movement.
10. She lightly jumps from foot to foot, signing with the opposite hand (to the foot that is off the ground) **SNOW++**. She ends the sequence with both hands showing **SNOW++**.
11. She does a walkover, and a spin.
12. Rok Nardi's song plays. Lindi looks up, questioning the sound/atmosphere change: **TELESCOPE**⁵⁹ to one corner, **TELESCOPE** to another corner, **TELESCOPE** to a third corner. **TELESCOPE** to the last corner. She becomes worried.
13. She looks at her hands **METEOR***.
14. She continues with **METEOR*** but looks into the space and 'places' them.
15. With the dips (the 'boom') in the music, she dodges a meteor. She does a forward roll.
16. Another dip ('boom') in the music, she dodges the meteor. She does a backwards roll.
17. She does a freeze movement (shoulder stand).

⁵⁹ The **TELESCOPE*** during the observing and imitating game is BSL. The **TELESCOPE** in the meteor section is SASL. We decided to use two different signs (that are still similar) to indicate a change in intention. The same or **METEOR**.



Figure 4. 53

Moon: the meteorites begin falling – this changes the Moon's style of dance. The pink lighting fades.

The outfit transforms in a final quick spin.

18. She adds a sequence of krump movements, adding in **METEOR** (right hand), **METEOR** (left hand), **HARD, HARD**.
 - a. She pulls the ribbon for her transformation.
19. She twirls on one spot, bringing her arms up like a ballerina thus allowing the dress to transform.
20. She falls to the ground.
21. She quickly makes her way under the table, hiding from the disaster.
22. There are slight dips ('booms') in the music again, which she again slightly pulls back from. During this sequence, she looks out into the distance and signs.
 - a. 'Boom' **RED** 'boom' **BLACK** 'boom' **FIRE**
23. The third song, by Evelyn Steine, begins playing. Lindi cautiously looks out at her home to see the damage.



Figure 4. 54

Moon: After the meteorite shower, the Moon looks at the damage to her home.

24. She does a shoulder stand on the table.
25. She places two **FIREBALL*** (one hand) **FIREBALL*** (other hand) **CRATER***
26. She places a third **FIREBALL***, and becomes upset at what she sees, **TEAR.**



Figure 4. 55

Moon: The Moon mourns.

27. She lies with her back on the table, distraught: **ACCIDENT HAPPEN WHY _le?**
28. After a few moments of trying to come to terms with what happened, she suddenly stops to listen with **HEAR**.
- a. She walks to a corner, with another **HEAR**.
 - b. She quickly goes to a second corner, and with an outstretched arm, brings in **HEAR**.
 - c. Lastly, she runs to a third corner and with a running jump, attempts to catch the sound – from **HEAR** to a fist.
29. She sways to the sound.
30. Lindi uses a V-hand to gently twirl herself around the table (touching the table), which progresses to a V-hand in the air, to a third time with the sign **DANCE**, till Lindi dances full body.
31. She is relieved, and sits on the table, looking at the stars.



Figure 4. 56

Moon: After hearing music and dancing to it, the Moon finds her way to her table and looks at the stars.

32. She lies down on her table again, stretching both sides with **MOON++**.

33. Lindi assumes her starting position with her head on her hands signing **ASLEEP**.
34. Malaika and Abigil enter, flying past Lindi.
35. Lindi looks up to see them. Malaika controls the spaceship stick puppet. **SUCCESS**.
36. The astronauts exit, making their way to the foyer.
 - a. Lindi goes to sleep, finally, with her head on **SLEEP**.



Figure 4. 57

Moon: As in the first scene in the Lab, the Moon lies ASLEEP on the table, with a pink special (this time in her character's costume).

37. Eduan walks in behind Malaika and Abigail, and with his neon orange sticks, indicates for the audience to follow him out of the theatre.

SCENE 16: LANDING

Venue: The mezzanine and foyer

Performers: Malaika and Abigail

Music: Rubina's Blue Sky Happiness (Joe Satriani)

1. Malaika and Abigail are waiting at 1/8 down the steps. The audience gathers at the top of the mezzanine. Eduan, with his sticks, blocks the audience from going too close to the steps.
2. Once the audience members have all left the theatre, the landing dialogue begins to play over the Satriani song. While the music/voiceover plays, the performers carry on with their movements.

STARCRUISER: Mission Control, this is Starcruiser. Good afternoon!

MISSION CONTROL: Starcruiser, Mission Control. Hear you loud and clear.
Good afternoon!

STARCRUISER: Returning from Mission Heartstone. Retro rocket sequence complete and decelerating for re-entry. Speed down to 17 000 (seventeen-thousand) mph though 400 000 (four-hundred-thousand) feet.

MISSION CONTROL: Starcruiser, you are cleared for re-entry. Call Kennedy Tower descending though 60 000 (sixty-thousand) feet.

STARCRUISER: Kennedy Tower, Starcruiser is through 60 000 (sixty-thousand) feet and maintaining 8 000 (eight-thousand) mph. Temperatures are down to normal and vehicle configured for landing.

KENNEDY TOWER: Starcruiser, the weather is fine and the visibility good.
Call finals for Runway 20 (two-zero) over outer marker.

STARCRUISER: Kennedy Tower, Starcruiser is your outer marker, 10 000 feet (ten-thousand) feet and established on the glide

slope for Runway 20 (two-zero). Kennedy Tower,
Starcruiser requesting clearance to land.

KENNEDY TOWER: Starcruiser, you are cleared to land on Runway 20 (two-zero). The wind is calm. Welcome back to Earth!

3. Abigail and Malaika descend the stairs – Malaika still holding the stick puppet, and Abigail holds Jenna's astronaut helmet.



Figure 4. 58

Landing: The Air Marshaller kept the audience upstairs. From the stairs, as the voiceover played with music, Commander Malaika and Flight Engineer Abby descended to Earth. Commander Malaika controlled the spaceship stick puppet, while Flight Engineer Abby had Command Pilot Jenna's helmet.

4. They continue a movement sequence in the foyer, till they reach the area they took-off from in the first scene. They land – Abigail holding **ROCKET**, as they go to the ground.



Figure 4. 59

Landing: The Astronauts land. Flight Engineer Abby shows ROCKET

5. Malaika switches the craft off. Helmets off. **DOOR-OPEN**.
6. The astronauts get out – Malaika leaves the spaceship stick puppet on the ground.
DOOR-CLOSED.
7. They make their way to the small benches where they originally retrieved their helmets from.
 - a. Malaika puts her helmet down (side).
 - b. Abigail puts her helmet down (side).
 - c. Abigail goes to put Jenna's helmet down – but then stops. She looks at the helmet, smiles, and keeps it under her arm.
8. Malaika and Abigail line up and look up to the audience on the mezzanine.
9. Malaika shows the Heartstone to the audience.



Figure 4. 60

Landing: Commander Malaika presents the Heartstone to the audience upstairs, showing the mission has successfully been completed.

10. Malaika signs to the audience **HEARTSTONE HAVE.**

11. Abigail signs up to the audience **SUCCESSFUL. EARTH SAFE.**

12. The two put their hands to their head, readying for a salute.

- a. They look from side to side of the audience, acknowledging them.
- b. The astronauts then look at each other.
- c. Salute.



Figure 4. 61

Landing: The Astronauts have succeeded in retrieving the Heartstone. Flight Engineer Abby holds Command

Pilot Jenna's helmet – keeping her memory alive. The two Astronauts salute.

13. Abigail goes in for a hug to Malaika – Malaika stops her by holding an arm out to stop her from coming too close.
14. Abigail smiles, and extends a hand.
15. They shake hands.
16. In a line, the two walk 'off-stage'.

END

This script contains the aspects I find most important about the performance.

Although the performance has been filmed, it is possible to miss some signs, because signing sometimes happens simultaneously by different performers. The recorded version of the production is also a helpful aid for looking at the movement elements of the production. You are able to pause or slow down the video to examine the movements used. I think that the scripted version is more helpful for examining the Sign Language used for a non-first language and non-fluent signer. It is easy to scan through the script and determine what each performer must sign. A fluent signer may find the video to be a preferred script, as they may pick-up the movements and signs easier than the written word.

At first, I was unsure how to document the performance (disregarding the video documentation). Describing movements is laborious and can often be unclear and I am not schooled in the Laban notation, or other forms of movement notation. Different people and groups interpret movements and ideas differently. Because each ensemble varies to a large extent, it is not realistic to expect them to follow the movements we used move-for-move. This would become even more unclear if I attempted to explain the signs and their handshapes. I would rather have various performers re-interpret a sequence and stick to the signs (or meaning of the signs) we used. Therefore, I have decided to give a brief explanation for the movements within the various sequences, and to clearly gloss the signs (in English) which we used.

I opted not to insert photos of each sign either. By doing this, I do not limit other performers' understanding/interpretation of a sign. For example, SASL has three versions of the sign for APPLE. Performers can use their discretion as to which APPLE they feel would suit their adaptation of the production. In many communities, even if they speak a Sign Language that is called the same, use different signs.

The signs can also easily be translated to any Sign Language. The colours easily identify each character. By using markers such as _le and _re, a signer is also able to clearly see the difference between a statement or a question. This script is thus more user-friendly to a deaf performer or someone who has access to Sign Language.

Unfortunately, this script creates a difficulty for a group/performer who has no access to SASL. Because there is no description of the sign, if the performer(s) does not have knowledge of the signs, or access to sites and people who can explain and produce the signs, it would be difficult to recreate the performance. For an all-hearing cast without any knowledge of or access to a Sign Language, this script may prove to be a challenge.

5. Chapter Five: Reflection and Conclusion

5.1 Reflection

5.1.1 Direction and Dedication

“The first month of rehearsal just had a sense of no direction. We were not growing as a cast.” (Extract from Caleb’s journal)

“Reflecting back [...], I don’t think the group bond was developed enough to create good images.” (Extract from Malaika’s journal)

The statements from the journals, reflect a predominant feeling amongst the cast for the first few weeks of rehearsals. Many of the performers did not know where the performance was heading, and they felt there was a weak connection amongst the cast.

I knew that my unwillingness to discuss the plot and its outcome in more detail contributed to their feeling of a lack of direction. During *Unfretted* (2017) we often did not understand our role in the performance. It was only a week or two before opening that we understood the order and how everything linked together. While I was not concerned (having never been in a Physical Theatre play before, I did not have very specific expectations) many of my cast members were anxious about not knowing what was happening. I think my not giving cast any specific details was influenced by my *Unfretted* experience. Listed below are several reasons why, in the beginning, I chose not to explain the plot in detail to the cast:

1. I did not want to negatively, or overly influence them (as my view of Physical Theatre is that it should come instinctively, and not be forced),
2. I wanted each performer to have a say in how the play developed,
3. I was still figuring out what made each performer tick and what I could expect from them,

4. Although I had an idea of the storyline I wanted, the performers were hardly ever all together at the same time in order for me to experiment with the scene – to keep it in or throw it out (I did not know whether the image would work in practice or not),
5. Last, but not least, I did not see the need to have to explain the details so early into rehearsing, since Physical Theatre practice often entails long periods of experimentation and improvisation before elements are ‘set’.

People are very different. Some people will be happy to go along without much explanation, while others want a detailed briefing. Performers are much the same. Lindi did not often question where a piece was going. She would merely try her best to develop and perfect her sequences, even if she did not know where they were going to be placed. She seemed to be able to trust my leadership in what we were busy with. Being a year older than the other performers, I think she also understood that sometimes a process, especially a Physical Theatre process, is not simple and clear from the beginning. She accepted that the explorations they were doing were going to help her. However, some of the other performers felt extremely lost. They did not understand why certain exercises were done, even if no set choreography was being developed from it. This, indeed, seemed like a waste of time to many of them while I understood why experimenting with walking on different surfaces and why exploring the Laban Technique could be useful.

Most of my performers felt they were not gelling with their cast members, especially in the first few weeks. The astronauts worked together well and developed a good rapport, but connecting them with some of the other performers was difficult. We only had about ten days over the month where everyone was present at the same time. Everything moved slowly and the group could not get comfortable with each other. My lack of experience in leading a Physical Theatre process meant I could not easily identify how the performers would fit

together. I had a good idea of the sequence of events I wanted but kept it to myself until a month into rehearsing. I wanted to draw inspiration from their movements and their preferences, and then incorporate/order them. I was also not completely sure whether my ideas were actually practical or not.

The first month of rehearsals was extremely difficult for a variety of reasons. The performers I used were all students who, understandably, have their own academic priorities. However, there were also non-academic events that suddenly occurred that drew my cast away from rehearsal. There was a large number of auditions for an interdepartmental drama festival, as well as auditions for two departmental plays. These auditions and the call-backs took place over the course of the same month I had set for rehearsals. My Stage Manager and I had to excuse one cast member from Monday and Wednesday rehearsals due to choir commitments. However, it was the cast members that messaged my Stage Manager or me, on the day of rehearsal, to tell us that they are attending an audition instead of coming to rehearsal, that frustrated us most. At times we even wondered if it was worth the effort to draw up a rehearsal schedule. The fragmented cast did not help with the process of creating an ensemble. There was a growing feeling amongst some of us, that certain individuals were just not interested and invested in the process and the play.

The stakes were much higher for me than for the rest of the cast and crew. This factor affected the process and feeling of neglect to the show, leaving me feeling frustrated and sometimes despondent. The performance was a major part of my (Master's Degree) research, and without it, I could not have done this written report. As I am being assessed on the performance it is very important for me to get good marks. My performers, on the other hand, had nothing to lose. I could not neglect the fact that I was to be marked on my work. Even though achieving high marks is not everything, when I do something, I like to do it to best of my ability.

A possible solution to this scenario is through a system where everyone taking part has something to gain or to lose. If a participant's commitment shows through his/her dedication, effort, punctuality, dependability and hard work, it must be counted towards his/her class marks, and vice versa. It will make my work as director, as well as for the other dedicated performers, so much easier and pleasant. This unequal level of commitment to a project is detrimental to the creative process, especially where Physical Theatre processes are used in the devising of work.

I also consider respect and attitude towards an older student a factor. I do believe there is also a different mindset when, working on a play for a professional in the industry, working on a play with a lecturer and then working on a play for another student. I have seen and experienced how students show more commitment and dedication to a performance when they are working with a lecturer, as opposed to a 'fellow student'. They would more readily make time for someone older, or in charge of their marks. It seemed almost easier and preferred, to work their schedule around someone like that, than someone they consider a student who, in their opinion, has little authority. I do not see myself equal to a lecturer, nor I am part of the 'lecturer' group, but it is about general personal respect and values.

As mentioned in chapter three, 'Mindfulness and Focus', I think the first time the entire cast and crew and I were all on the same page, was the show nights. Somewhere, in the quiet before the show, a cloud of calm and understanding rested on all of us. This changed the performance and elevated it to a level I had never seen before. This could be because it was the first time everyone was quiet and just present with each other. In retrospect, I think starting off each week with a moment of awareness and stillness could have helped the performers focus themselves and connect with their cast.

5.1.2 *Physical Theatre Process*

“The power that the body and its expression holds is endless. It is spiritual.” (Extract from Caleb’s journal).

At the beginning of the process, I felt extremely unsure of myself, having never attempted a project like this before in the position of a director. I attempted to find as many exercises that might be useful in creating content. Some of the exercises I gave, I had never done myself and thus had no point of reference as to what the exercise might produce from the performers. I worked out lists and tried to only do explorations which would actively benefit the cast and the process of performance creation. As rehearsals progressed, many of the exercises and original ideas fell away and seemed useless. Although, I do find that even if not actively helpful, some of these ‘useless’ exercises do allow for exploration to take place that may never have occurred before. I often felt some exercises were more successful than others. One of the more successful exercises, I believe, was the Washing Machine (Muir & Hammond, 1997: p. 56). This exercise was a fun and casual way, to have the performers become aware of, and used to, having bodies in their space.

The performers found it helpful to draw the cartoon faces of the various emotions – it allowed the performers to examine just what is it, that makes an expression and how much of a relaxed/tensed muscle is needed to portray that emotion. The focus on facial expressions pushed them to become aware of a nonverbal communication system which is very important in SASL. Though they played it very safe in the beginning, and had realistic (natural) faces and movements, after some encouragement and approval by my supervisor, the cast felt more comfortable playing with their faces and making a bigger show of feelings on their faces. They became comfortable with exaggerating their emotions and feelings in their expressions and this in turn helped the audience relate better to them and the story.

I do not think we spent enough time on puppetry – in learning how to interact with an object. My lack of experience, and possibly attention, to the puppets became a disadvantage in the sense that my performers often appeared to feel uncomfortable with their puppets. Instead of holding the puppet in a way the audience could see the front (bulk) of the puppet, they were often held sideways and obscured. The way they manipulated the movements of the puppets often became monotonous as well. For a long time during rehearsals all the puppets seemed to take on a singular way of moving. It was only after Professor Du Preez attended a run of the performance to deliver feedback, that the puppets began developing a life of their own. He was able to demonstrate to the performers how interesting an object could be. Something that should be logical, but was overlooked, is that each puppet should have his own way of moving – each one has a rhythm. These movements can be matched to how the ‘real’ person or object moves. While details like this were noticed and focused on quite late in the process, they should have been attended to earlier.

Physical Theatre is indeed a difficult form of theatre and requires much dedication and persistence. It is tough on the mind and extremely taxing on the body. In his journal, Caleb writes:

“The last few weeks [before the show] did become a big struggle due to the fact that we were also doing our first semester exams. This meant a solo and duet exam for movement. It was as if we were being bombarded with physical theatre. Our bodies were in very vulnerable states [sic]. We would be rehearsing 4 hours on our degree. Then another 3 or 4 hours on [*Mission: Heartstone*]. In the end I came out physically stronger. It was eye opening to see how far my body could go. I realised how spectacular the human body is.”

I wonder if we had had less time to rehearse, whether the urgency and overall dedication/excitement would have been greater. Creating a piece in two and a half months feels long, especially when one has many priorities outside of rehearsal, one may become

tired and possibly despondent. I do think we should have condensed our rehearsal time to, perhaps, a month and a half, or less.

I believe I should have made the cast aware of the direction of the piece earlier, and we should have created the piece in a shorter period of time. Regardless, the last two weeks leading up to the performances offered many fruitful days of rehearsals.

Professor Du Preez attended a run of the performance and noted that the performance lacked enough SASL. There was not enough prominence given to Sign Language. By the time of his feedback, I think the piece had fallen into a cycle of ‘mediocre comfortability’. The performers were just doing as they were told and as I had seen the piece rehearsed for such a long time I was not able to criticise the piece objectively anymore. His fresh set of eyes steered the performance into a positive direction again.

Over the next two days, there was a 50% increase of Sign Language in the piece. My knowledge in SASL had increased drastically, and I had found the additional BSL site (*Scottish Sensory Centre*). This made the play feel truer to its aim of incorporating Sign Language. The performers also found that adding the additional signs helped to challenge them, thus drawing them out of their ‘mediocre comfortability’. They suddenly had to remember many more signs, practice the signing to allow their hands to be used to the movement, and they were given the chance to incorporate signs more creatively. It made them feel they were not just merely doing merely ‘physically’ and ‘movement-like’ with something gestural, but using actual Sign Language.

Incorporating Sign Language from the beginning proved to be difficult. I was slowly learning SASL, so I could only slowly relay the information to my performers. Much of what I was learning was also not applicable to the play. For example, nowhere in the performance would we want to use the sentence “Are your parents working or pensioners?” Because of the lack of vocabulary to form coherent ideas and sentences that would be applicable to an

astronomy-themed story, our process was emphasised much more by common Physical Theatre influences (for example: mime, puppetry, contact improvisation) to start with. Once I had the weather terminology available to me, Lascelles's Cleo solos were greatly influenced by the topic. I was able to provide her with many different signs and suggestions. This allowed her piece to be dense in the use of signs. It also allowed her to explore her character's reactions to the weather from a different angle. She incorporated signs throughout a section of movement: sometimes it would start a section, other times there would be a couple of signs in the middle of her movement phrase, and at times she ended her movement with a final sign. Lindi's Moon also benefited from the signs, but perhaps not to the extent Lascelles did. The signs offered Lindi a starting point, for each section within her sequence. This initial sign led the way from her proceeding movements. For example, in the beginning of each imitation in the Moon's game, began with Lindi taking out a TELESCOPE. It was with Lindi and Lascelles that Sign Language helped develop their sequences. With Malaika, Jenna and Abigail (as astronauts) the signs were more of an addition to their movements. Instead of making a story from the signs, they had a story and inserted words/signs. They were able to recall signs they learnt and apply it to their situation. For example, after the formation of the Slinky Planet animals and basic sequence, the three used signs such as ANIMAL and CUTE to give more detail to the scene.

If we had more vocabulary available from the beginning, we would have been able to develop more scenes around signs, as opposed to inserting the signs into already created scenes. If we had sat down and discussed a scene (for instance Planet X) and wanted it to be 'a hot desert planet, barren and treacherous with volcanoes, skeletons and fossils embedded in the stone, and a dense dusty atmosphere' – and had known the SASL vocabulary to explain this scene – we could have developed the planet around those signs. It would also have felt truer to the idea of developing a performance via Sign Language. If *Mission: Heartstone* was

to be developed now, later in the year – instead of April 2019 – I think the piece would have developed very differently. Now, I am able to form grammatical sentences, and I have the ability to sign a much wider variety of vocabulary.

If we had had an interpreter available to us, it would have made a huge difference. If the performers wanted to know a sign or sentence during rehearsals, the interpreter would have been able to give it to them immediately to incorporate it into their movements. The performers would also have felt more confident in their signing, because someone who is proficient in the language would have been there to correct and help them produce a sign correctly. as opposed to a beginner like me. An experienced signer can see things that a beginner like me cannot see.

5.1.2.1 Take-Off Scene

The take-off scene was one of the scenes I found the most difficult to work on. There always seemed to be something missing – it is the beginning of the play and should set the audience up for a mystical adventure, however, I never felt it achieved that outcome. Even after telling the performers they could do whatever they thought may work best, they continued sticking to the original (unsuccessful) idea. In my mind, the carrier aircraft were to be connected to each other (holding hands), but at the moment they broke away from each other, they could create movements inspired by holding a 2-3 foot string in their hands, and playing with what that movement would allow for. I did this many times on my own, with the music, and felt it suited the feeling of the piece very well. That is, from my personal viewpoint of someone who enjoys Satriani's music and exploring movement with their hands and arms. This increased my enjoyment of playing around with different ideas around flight and space travel. I do not feel my performers connected with the idea like I did. There were times I felt the performers took their 'roles' very personally, and at times forgot they had to act (even if they did not enjoy it).

When I look back at the videos of the performance, one of the things that bothers me is Lindi and Lascelles deadpan expressions. While Malaika, Abigail and Jenna take on their characters and are either smiling in excitement, or furiously concentrating, they are expressing it on their faces – there is a sense of acting and enjoyment. Unfortunately, Lindi and Lascelles look extremely unhappy to be doing what they were doing. I wonder, if it had been Lascelles and Caleb, or Lindi and Caleb, would the dynamics have led to an enjoyment of the scene, or a better facial expression? Perhaps Lindi and Lascelles did not feel their part in the scene was important – even after I spoke to the group and said it is the first scene and it sets the tone of the play, so anyone in it is of great importance. As an audience member, seeing the deadpan faces, I felt disconnected from them and did not understand their dramatic function. My attention was rather given to the astronauts who were radiating an energy of adventure.

Because this was a Physical Theatre and SASL driven performance, the face and facial expressions should have been heightened throughout the performance, by every performer. Miming highlights the importance of facial expression. SASL places extreme importance on facial expressions. If an audience member is unsure of what is happening in a scene, by observing the performer's face, they can clarify the events. The eyes, eyebrows and mouth carry so much meaning within them. As humans, seeing someone's expression also influences us. If I see someone is excited – bright and wide eyes, raised eyebrows and a large smile on their face – it immediately attracts me and influences me. The same with if I see someone who looks upset – if their eyes are downturned and their lips are straight or resembling a frown – I become concerned and upset. If someone is disinterested – with blank eyes and a blank expression – I too become disinterested. It is important to keep your audience engaged – and part of that means to have an animated face. Because the performers aren't working with spoken language, they cannot use their words to entice and engage the

audience. They must use their body and their facial expressions. I feel this focus on importance on facial expressions was only incorporated when the performers entered the Lab theatre, as opposed to form the very beginning of the play.

5.1.3 Teaching and Directing Style

Engelsrud (2007) describes three different styles of teaching she observed while taking part in a contact improvisation workshop. Style A (Engelsrud, 2007: p. 64) focus on movement and non-verbal cues. These teachers show their students what they are expecting the students to mimic or explore. With this style of teaching, it is assumed the movement and highly physical energy draws the students into the exercise. Teachers who are trained in ballet, martial arts, or other movement art forms generally apply this style.

Style B (Engelsrud, 2007: p. 65) incorporates an explanation and a physical demonstration or exploring, with the students. The speech used is directed at the students. While the teacher explains the exercise, they move with their students. As with style A, teachers experienced in ballet and other movement forms often adopt this form of teaching.

Style C (Engelsrud, 2007: p. 66) is described as the teacher taking a step back from the exercise, where they only speak the instructions to the performers. They direct the performers though the exercise, however, do not become physically active in demonstrations. Unlike Style B, the verbal cues are not directed to just the students – they are directed into the space.

I found myself predominantly using Style C and adapting to Style B when there were uneven numbers of performers at rehearsals (when I wanted an exercise to be explored in pairs). I verbally told them what I wanted them to do – I did not often move with them. The few times I did move with them, was when I gave the group an impulse exercise, and there was an uneven number at the rehearsal. In the exercise, the one partner had to give their partner an impulse which would take them to the floor, where they would explore the impulse

till it faded, and then the partner who gave the impulse would find a way to bring their partner back up. To give each performer the change to give and receive an impulse, I joined the group. First, I explained the exercise, and then joined the group. I worked with Caleb and Malaika. Interestingly, Caleb interpreted the exercise and exploring the impulse on the floor till someone stopped him and brought him up, as opposed to him finding a moment to stop himself.

Reading Engelsrud's (2007) work was enlightening because it made me aware of my own workings with a cast. Although I do not mind moving and physically showing an exercise, I tend to merely explain the exercise. I avoid Style A and just begin to move, because I did not feel the group would pick up on what they were meant to do. I have more trust in my words than my physical actions.

Another aspect I am aware of about myself, is that if I do not like a move or how something is developing, I often use sentences such as "I'm not so sure about this thing" or "I think you should try something different here". I generally do not tell a performer the exact change they should make. There is an implication, rather than a direct order for change. This worked for some performers. I found Lindi was especially accepting of this way of directing. She would go off by herself, and try three or four options, then show me what she had rehearsed, and thought might work. Again, not all people react the same. People refer different strategies of feedback: some people prefer hints, and others prefer a more direct approach (they want to know the exact change they should make). As a director, I do not normally make decisions on the spur of the moment but take my time to contemplate all the options. I do not automatically know what would work in its place. Sometimes (such as in Lindi reaching out her x3 HEAR signs, Lascelles's use of a one-leg balance during her winter scene, and Jenna's questioning how Abigail was and telling Abigail to watch her) I do know what will work best, and make an immediate decision.

This goes back to actor's preferred styles of critique. It is difficult finding a way of directing in a way which everyone will like. It was a steep learning curve to experience how each performer worked and reacted. It is a challenge for me, and for them, to find the place of compromise. Some performers want to know exactly what to change. Others like having the option to explore various options. Lindi, for example, often tried a couple of alternatives to moves I did not think were appropriate and on her own came to find better suited movements. Lascelles and Caleb seemed to react better to me telling and showing them 'Do this'. Some performers I had to raise my voice or be sharper with, while others responded better to a gentle word or slight suggestion. I often found I would, in myself, feel distressed and anxious when I had to reprimand someone more assertively – even though I knew it was valid and needed. For example, constantly being on one's phone on *Instagram* while I was actively giving feedback (which was meant for the person on the phone as well) was disrespectful to me, and the cast. Eventually, I had to speak up, otherwise, they missed important notes and were not on track with the changes being made. This part of the process made me uncomfortable, because I sometimes came across as unfair.

There are two main ways the ensemble then experiences this reprimanding – some, who are innocent, appreciate the sternness and element of control over those who are being reprimanded. They too become frustrated with the unnecessary actions and disrespect from the guilty party. The rebuking reinforces values (general respect), manners and focus. On the other hand, those being reprimanded, become slightly withdrawn. This lasted merely for the rehearsal, and at the next rehearsal, they were focused and working again. Whether Lindi was being reprimanded or not, when I raised my voice, she seemed to become quieter, as if taking the guilt on herself. Afterwards, after a few softer words, she once again become light and bubbly. I think this is my main concern, because I am also like that – even if I am not the one being scolded, I feel bad for the person and take that energy on myself. However, I know this

is not all people. Caleb and Lascelles seemed unconcerned if something like this happened. I do not feel anyone came out of the process begrudging anyone's treatment of them. Everyone just had a better understanding of the social expectations in the group, and the attitude and behaviour that was expected in our rehearsal space. Since the production was housed at a Drama department, the production was also part of a training process where students can experience and learn their craft during a production process. This type of actions are necessary as well, since it instils a discipline necessary for the rehearsal and production process.

Critique is one of the most helpful elements in life and helps one better themselves. For me, although I am aware of it, one of the moments I appreciated was when I read Abigail's journal and read the following:

"I do personally feel like as the director; Jamie could have been a bit firmer. Especially to people being late, or cast members constantly talking while some was trying to stay focused. I feel like her firmness came a bit too late. This firm "foundation" should have been made known to the cast from the start of rehearsals. I understand Jamie is a bit of a soft hearted person, and always wants to take everyone into consideration, but there needs to be a line that is drawn and an understanding. As sweet as Jamie is, I feel like she needs a bit firmer, so that certain cast members do not just walk over her. I enjoy Jamie's directing system [...]."

I do appreciate a cast member saying this, because it confirms to me that I am not the only person bothered by this type of behaviour. The cast was relatively large and had very dominant personalities in it. I did not handle the group as well as I would have hoped. In retrospect, there is so much I could have and should have changed to elicit better work from the cast, and myself. There were definite times I should have been firm with cast members, reprimanding them for having bad rehearsal discipline or not attending rehearsals or learning lines and working on them. It became clear from this process that I need to be more assertive in the directing and teaching process. However, when I began indicating my dissatisfaction,

because of my soft beginning, I unfortunately appeared unfair and rude. I learned that I have the right to voice my opinion and dissatisfactions, and not fold to every whim – especially as a director and as an individual that has to give shape to a performance. This was another steep learning curve as a young director working with the Physical Theatre process. The style of making theatre is collaborative in nature, but eventually the director has to make the creative decisions in what material should be shown or discarded.

My Honours Directing lecturer, Dr André Gerber, gave me advice which I shall cherish for the rest of my life: “You are a director. Your job is not to be liked. It is to put on a great play.” I must constantly remind myself of this fact.

5.1.4 Sign Language

Unfortunately, I do not know how *Mission: Heartstone* read to a deaf audience. To my knowledge, every audience member was hearing audience member. I am disappointed to not be able to discuss with a deaf audience member their interpretation of the show, and whether for them, the signing was informative and useful to them or not, and indeed whether or not the SASL combined with BSL was a jarring element in the show. I would also have liked to have asked them just how successful they thought the signing was. In playing for a deaf audience, the performance could not be measured. However, I did try advertising and attracting a deaf audience. I hope to one day be able to stage *Mission: Heartstone* again, and this time in front of a deaf audience to entertain and get feedback from them. For these specific three performances, I can only discuss the performances based on what my hearing audience members told me.

My lexicon has greatly expanded over the last four months and I personally understand the structure of SASL better. I can talk about many more topics and I can create more complex sentences. Although I have not learnt in depth physics or astronomy in SASL, I do feel I can better describe everyday surroundings and occurrences. I would now be able to

create sentences such as: “We must urgently find the Heartstone” (INDEX3 HEARTSTONE URGENT FIND MUST), “Be careful. This planet has many earthquakes” (INDEX2 CAREFUL. PLANET THIS EARTHQUAKES MANY HAVE) or “You are a thief! Why should I help you?” (INDEX2 THIEF. 1HELP2 WHY_le⁶⁰?) with more confidence. I would also be able to teach my performers with more confidence. The performance could have explored richer in Sign Language elements.

In retrospect, after gaining so much more knowledge in SASL, I would have liked to have had more complete sentences in the performance, rather than merely single words being signed. The sentences may have helped with the flow of the story. Also, when the performers would think ‘this is what I am saying’, they would not merely have to think of an isolated word, but rather connect it to other meanings.

Observing how the performers reacted and included Sign Language was extremely interesting for me. I did not explain the parameters to my cast members, and thus I do not believe they were actively thinking: “What is the correct location? What is the correct handshape? Is my orientation correct? Am I making the correct movement? How is my facial expression relating to my sign?” Had I made my performers aware of this, their overall correctness of their signing (without my interference) would have been better. I think knowing the parameters would have added a level of awareness to the language, and that there is much more to a sign than meets the eye.

By having the astronauts predominantly communicate with Sign Language, I noticed the group becoming close to each other. They actively engaged with incorporating the signs I showed them. Among the three astronauts, they often reminded each other of signs that could

⁶⁰ _le = lowered eyebrows for wh-questions. See subheading 2.3.2 *Teaching of SASL and the Incorporation of Sign Language in the Performance* for a detailed summery of some glossing terms.

be used in the play, and would, at times, correct each other when seeing an incorrect sign. I think this helped the group grow, with each astronaut supporting and looking out for each other; this created a sense of ensemble amongst those members of the cast. As mentioned, Abigail, Malaika and Jenna were of the three performers I felt were the most willing to use signs and to make mistakes. When we suddenly increased the use of signs at the late stage of rehearsals, some two weeks before the first performance, they were the ones to openly and easily incorporate new signs and use them to expand the images we created on stage.

I found Lindi to be slightly wary of incorporating signs she had not rehearsed. While willing to attempt different signs, she seemed slightly reluctant at times to create signs she had not often practiced. However, once she had become accustomed to the signs, she confidently produced them. Sometimes, Lindi's signs would not be sufficiently articulated and they would get lost in her movement – for example, when she was stretching and signing MOON. If she was not in a 'crisp' movement place that day, her stretch and the MOON shape would often mesh together. This did not heavily influence the understanding of the sequence though, as her character was rather abstract. At the beginning, when Lindi thought of the images her Moon would see, we used very iconic signs: WOLF, CAT, SOCCER. She used these signs, followed by her whole body, to produce the images. There was an element of fun and mime in these initial scenes. We were able to explore ways of repeating a sign. The inspiration of this came from the spoken word: when a performer performs a poem or monologue or any piece, and there is a repeated word "Rage, rage against the dying of the light", (from Dylan Thomas's *Do not go gentle into that good night*) 'rage' is not said in the same manner twice. By changing in repetition in tone or pitch, there is a new emphasis and a different intention given to the word/scenario. Taking this example, I did not want Lindi to continuously create a sign in the same manner. The main sign we played with was WOLF and it expanded from just being a 'normal' sign to finally incorporating her entire body. This

idea was then expended to her final Moon scene with her DANCE sign. This became a delicate sequence, with a play on the sign. Instead of the sign merely being ‘the sign’ it became part of a bigger movement.

I think, this technique, of deciding on a sign and then using that impulse to create new material was quite successful. Lindi was able to take a very simple sign and repeat it in several different manners. Mainly, a sign started small, such as her HEAR when she hears the music and expands as her determination to find the sound grows. This, however, could be flipped so that the sign and movement start out big, and slowly become smaller. She could perhaps have showed FIRE fiercely and occupied her entire signing space, and as the fire died out, she could have decreased her signing space and made her hand movements smaller, until there was nothing left.

At times, when exploring possible material, one is uncertain of what moves to make. There are so many possibilities that at times it causes some indecisiveness, and a creative blockage may occur. However, if one can find signs that suit the theme, or find the signs for a sentence, from there the body and mind has a rooted starting point. For example, if I chose a sentence such as WINTER LEAF++ RED ORANGE YELLOW BROWN FALL but wanted to perform it with a Physical Theatre influence, I could use the transition moments between each sign to incorporate some additional movement. I would have beginning and ending points between each sign, and merely need to fill in the middle.

Many uninformed audiences think that Physical Theatre may not contain speaking. There is the underlying idea that no words should be incorporated into the performance. However, there is nothing wrong with having dialogue in a Physical Theatre orientated/developed play, as can be seen in the work of DV8 and *Clockfire Theatre Company*. Perhaps, if someone is adamant not to use the verbal language, Sign Language could be incorporated. Not only is it a ‘silent’ manner of speaking (and could allow the

performers to become more comfortable and confident in their interactions between characters) but there is a sense of communication when people see two people signing together.

I also think, when creating a show using Physical Theatre methods in this context, connecting the importance of facial expression and iconicity in Sign Languages to Physical Theatre, is important. If there are not many words in a show, a performer must communicate with their body. The performer must use their face to tell the audience the story. The face must express every emotion clearly. In Sign Language, this too is important. An eyebrow, mouthing, mouth gesture or eye focus could indicate a number of things, and it is thus important to be clear in your facial expressions. The face must tell a story.

Iconicity of signs also helps the audience connect with the material and more easily connect the dots in a performance. Everyone has very particular connotations to objects, people, events, etcetera. If one was to ask a group of people to create a gesture for a word, many people would show every different gesture, based on their experiences. Sign Languages often create a sign based off their physical appearance, or the action that is made while completing an activity. For example, TEA: in SASL there are various signs but two of the predominant ones is of the F-hand shape ‘dipping’ into a C-handshape (the dipping of a teabag in a cup) or lifting the F-hand to the mouth (like the holding of a cup, with the fancy pinkie extended). These two signs are transparent iconic signs. The transparency of a sign differs in various cultures. Japanese signers may not drink tea the same way South Africans do; therefore the sign would not be recognised. When I refer to iconicity in this thesis, I am referring to a standard SASL/South African culture (which in itself is extremely diverse). The incorporation of signs like these make the language more universal, or accessible, for people who do not know the language. Using signs like this in a play, thus makes the play more accessible for audiences of various languages.

The use of SASL and BSL did not seem to deter hearing audiences. One audience member commented that they would have liked posters or something, that included some of the signs used in the performance so that they could attempt to identify the signs and learn some signing during the show. However, they also mentioned that if it were in the pamphlet or poster (in the Foyer), they, as an audience member, might be so focused on trying to figure out what a sign meant, that they would lose track of the performance. They mentioned this, not because they felt they did not understand the storyline and use of the signs, but rather because they wanted something tangible to learn from – something to turn back to later. I understand this to an extent. For example, if I watched a play in English, and one character used French sentences, though I might not understand word for word what they mean, I am able to interpret the meaning because of context, tone, body language and other character's reactions. However, not knowing the language, I would be unable to accurately produce the sentence again (due to my lack of knowledge in French, and possibly only hearing it once) and likely forget it. If the show's booklet had a section with the French sentences, I would be able to, at my own time, look back and investigate the sentences more thoroughly. I could relate this back to the Sign Language used.

This was a comment from only one person. Besides this person, the audience members' feedback had no interest in a pamphlet and felt the show was a success without the extra information. I think, in the end, this is a personal preference. In the end, the 'lack' of additional Sign Language information available to the audience did not negatively affect the production.

During one performance, I was sitting next to a friend of my mother. As Lascelles signed PLAY (to Abigail on Planet Heartstone), she asked me what the sign meant. I copied the sign and told her it meant play. After the performance, when speaking to her, she created sentences with the word 'play' in them and then produced the sign. This was lovely to see. I

hope this extended to other audience members as well – that the audience members would ask their friends in the cast “What did this mean (insert the sign, or something similar to it)?” and the cast would be able to tell them. Little instances like this helps bring about awareness to SASL, and Sign Languages in general. If one hearing person a night would have asked ‘What does this mean?’ I would consider the production very successful, as there is a dialogue opened about Sign Language in general, not merely in performance.

One moment that touched me, was when Abigail sent our cast/crew WhatsApp group a video of her (Abigail) asking her little sister to show her the signs for different colours. I was pleasantly surprised and excited to see that Abigail had taught her sister some signs that would interest her. I think this sharing of signs is an incredibly important occurrence: something that extends much, much further than merely seeing and acknowledging a Sign Language was used in a show.

5.1.5 Performance

A friend of mine came on the last evening to see the show. He is in his mid-twenties and has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). He is easily distracted, easily side-tracked, has trouble focusing his attention, often talks excessively (even in social situations which request silence), fidgets and has difficulty sitting still for long periods. None of these features are sought-after when attending a theatre production (or even a cinema film).

Although excited he was coming to the show, I worried how comfortable he would be and whether he would accept the fantastical world we were trying to create or find it boring. He noticed the rouge lighting cue. He noticed a quick moment during the Slinky Planet scene where someone’s bouncy ball almost disappeared into the audience. But, none of these moments seemed to distract him to a point of disinterest in the show, as there were other moments that pulled him back in. Abigail states in her journal regarding the final performance:

“My family really enjoyed it, and I did not hear my siblings crying during the shows so I assume they enjoyed it as well. And usually they don’t sit still for long, unless they are really intrigued, which I think they were.”

This, to me, is wonderful feedback: a play should engage the audience and not make them feel like the minutes are slowly wasting away. If this play was able to keep the attention of a person with ADHD and entertain the little siblings and family members of the cast members, I am satisfied that the performance successfully reached an audience.

Two people mentioned to me that they thought the beginning dialogue set the piece well. Even though the take-off and landing recordings were not always clear, they thought it gave the piece atmosphere. Whether it was in English, Afrikaans or Xhosa did not bother them, they thought the radio-intercom effect was classic to an airport. They also mentioned that the astronauts’ take-off spoken dialogue could very easily be translated into another language. The rest of the play would be able to continue as normal, because there was no other verbal communication in the show.

Abigail supplied me with the following information in her journal regarding the second performance:

“I was actually fairly nervous, as a good friend of mine was coming to watch. He really enjoyed it. And he is the kind of person that is very opinionated but he enjoyed the performance so much, all he could say was, ‘WOW’. But he did have a few questions which was expected, he was confused with Lindi’s character and what she was. When I said she’s the moon, it was like everything clicked. And then he asked if [Lascelles] was like a planet, and I explained it to him. He does not watch plays often and this was his first ‘abstract’ play (as he described it) that he watched, and the fact that he understood it so well and understood the storyline is a definite conclusion that the play was a success. Not just successful in allowing the audience to be taken on a journey, but allow them to understand every aspect of it.”

Malaika adds in her journal: “The feedback I received included that the show was highly enjoyable, and it is shows like ours that encourage people to really appreciate theatre in all its forms”.

5.2 Conclusion

Physical Theatre requires time and dedication. When there is a cast of two or more people, the cast cannot merely be a group – they must become an ensemble.

The idea of ensemble has always been a part of theatre and performance, though it has not always been called ‘ensemble’. Many companies and casts do find themselves being an ensemble. However, it is not easily defined what exactly an ensemble is. Love (2016) states it “is something that happens. It’s not a steady state, it’s a process. It’s something which always is happening and is going to at some point run out, because people move on”. Britton (2013: p. 17) suggests an ensemble should be “a constellation of individuals who act independently. It is a network of diversities” and that the “prime condition for working in a group is to have the capacity of being on your own – as not to become a burden on the others. This is the principle of collaboration on the ‘floor’ during improvisations; it is also the basic principle of hospitality... otherwise one ends up imposing on, rather than encountering, the other” (Britton, 2013: p. 14). Being an ensemble, means being in a constant process. It requires artistic individuals who can come together to create something that is living and constantly evolving (yet always carries a certain definable trait or energy).

The cast of *Mission: Heartstone* had a variety of personalities and each took on various roles within the group. Lindi took on the role of the practitioner in the group: she influences the group to practically experiment and explore possible movements. She mobilised the cast members who tended to want to talk though the creation of their moves, more than put their ideas to the test. Jenna, Caleb and Lascelles were the jokers in the group, breaking any extreme tension and seriousness. They often helped lighten the atmosphere and

brought laughter to the group. Lindi and Lascelles would often become director in the ensemble. They were able to get the group all on the same page. They were often the ones to suggest the sequence of scenes, making use of their fellow members ideas. Malaika and Abigail were supporters. Their constant willingness to engage with everyone, and offer words of encouragement, brought the group closer to each other. Jenna and Lindi were also supporters and would try to get everyone involved and not let anyone feel left out. This group dynamic, as any social circle, is extremely important to the growth of a group. The ensemble members need to be comfortable around each other so that they feel it is safe to explore all options. In Physical Theatre exercises, there is often lifting of a performer or an attempt at balancing bodies in some way. Performers are also forced to share their personal space with other people. To achieve this, one needs extended rehearsal time. It takes time to establish effective communication and testing people in the group. The night of the first performance, this 'ensemble-ness' became cemented in the cast. Like a puzzle, their individual roles within the group clicked together and there was a collaboration and understanding in the group that led to successful performances.

When working with younger actors, who have not had the experience of being in a Physical Theatre developed show before, and are not used to the process, I think it is important to guide them and explain relatively early in the process the overall idea surrounding the show. Informing them of the theme, and the initial storyline (or the storyline one is attempting to explore) would help direct them, since then the process would be more collaborative in nature, and the developing process would be more aimed in establishing the collaborative aim of the work. They may feel more comfortable with themselves, and also have more confidence in their director and that the director has indeed an idea/vision in mind.

Each ensemble works differently, and it is important to find what works for each individual ensemble. However, using tried and tested exercises is a good starting point for

new ensembles and inexperienced members. These pre-existing exercises have been devised and altered to elicit reactions from performers and encourage exploration (by the individual and the ensemble). There are many exercises readily available for a group to explore. Once the group is more comfortable, they can adapt these exercises to suit their and their show's needs. It is important to explore a variety of exercises – focus, strength, mindfulness, flexibility and different technique exercises all help improve a performer's skills.

Mission: Heartstone was developed and advertised to be a family friendly show. The performance was under an hour and a half, and our audience ranged from very young children to audience members in their mid-seventies. There were no walkouts, and it appeared as if the audience was well engaged in the performance. Overall, the various ages seemed to enjoy the performance. I do think this performance took on a feeling of a children's theatre production. The incorporation of a "just for fun" and light-hearted topic, "visually stimulating" elements of "non-realism" such as mime and dramatic facial expressions, allowed the performance to take on an aesthetics suitable for children's theatre (Brown, 2014).

Many audience members suggested I alter the performance slightly to become a fully children's theatre performance. This reinforced the idea that *Mission: Heartstone* could fit into the Children's Theatre style. I do not think there is an ideal audience – Physical Theatre and SASL can be accessible to any group, as long as they are open to the style and the incorporation of a Sign Language. This play is easily entertaining for hearing and deaf audiences (I am basing my assumption that a deaf audience would relate to the show because it incorporated their language, but also on the general reaction of the audience that was present at the shows).

The (hearing) audience was open to the incorporation of Sign Language in the performance. Sometimes, the difference between a sign or gesture/movement was not clear to

the audience because (to my knowledge) no audience members had Sign Language training (except Abigail's little sister!) and because of this, when Lascelles or Lindi were performing their solos (which emphasised a smoothness between sign and movement) the audience could not tell the difference. However, this did not take away from the overall meaning of the play. The iconic signs assisted the audience in assuming the situation. After the shows, I was often asked "What does this sign mean?" by the audience members – they had recalled a sign and attempted to reproduce it (the correctness of the reproduction of the sign varying from audience member to audience member). It showed that they noticed these 'gesture-like' moments and assumed them to be Sign Language. All of the things people asked me, turned out to be actual SASL (of course, this could just be coincidence – I would need a larger test group to determine whether a hearing person can identify a sign inherently, even if they do not understand it). I see this as one of the positive outcomes of the play.

As for a deaf audience, as mentioned, I did not see a deaf audience member at the show. I can only imagine what they would have liked to see in the performance. A deaf audience would want more coherent sentences, instead of individual words the entire time. An SASL audience would only want, ideally, SASL to be present in the play, just like an audience with only BSL knowledge would like the play to only make use of BSL. Tracy Duncan informed me in a personal e-mail (2019) "BSL is very hard for the South African Deaf to follow as we use SASL". I understand this completely. Sign Languages develop differently all over the world – it is not to say just because once can sign, they can understand all Sign Languages. To give the performance even more validity, I think the Deaf community would have wanted someone deaf to be involved in the production – whether as a performer or an interpreter – for the sake of representation and/or just to have someone who completely understands the language to be involved in the production. It is challenging to produce a play if one does not know the language or culture of the audience one wants to present the play to.

Their knowledge about their language and their culture, would have informed the conversations that took place between the various characters. Someone who is fluent in SASL would have helped push the production to reach its goal of incorporating SASL even more successfully: the sentence structures would be more accurate, there would be a deeper interpretation of the scenes from the very beginning, and the overall focus of the performance would have been more on SASL.

I think the process and show was overall successful in combining Physical Theatre practices with Sign Language. There was an attempt to incorporate signs in different ways (such as inserting the signs into pre-conceived movements or using the signs to inspire movement). For a group of hearing performers and a hearing director, who had little to no knowledge of Sign Language, to learn vocabulary so quickly and be willing to incorporate it into a performance, is quite bold. *Mission: Heartstone* was a starting point. The process and production were an experiment to see whether Sign Language could be used in conjunction with the many facets of Physical Theatre to create a piece of theatre. The Physical Theatre process highlighted the individuality of performers, but also how, when focused and determined, the individuals can become an ensemble. By incorporating Sign Language, a voice was given to a language that is not often acknowledged. This language was able to positively influence the minds and movements of the performers – there were so many moments in the play that would never have arisen, had Sign Language not been an impulse in the process. Should I have the opportunity to work on such a show again, I would happily incorporate what I have observed from *Mission: Heartstone* and take it further.

Physical Theatre and Sign Language can proudly walk hand in hand onto the theatre stage.

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7. Addendums

7.1 Addendum A: Consent Form



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are invited to take part in a study conducted by Jamie Marais, from the Drama Department at Stellenbosch University, for my Master's research project. You were approached as a possible participant because you have a basic theoretical and practical knowledge of performance and show an interest in acting/performance.

I. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the use of South African Sign Language in a Physical Theatre process of creating a performance. It aims to investigate how a sign system (such as Sign Language where hand movements have conventionalized meanings) and gestural/body movements can relay a story.

II. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF YOU?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to:

- be a *performer* in a Physical Theatre lead show. This will include attending rehearsals over the course of approximately 8 weeks. Rehearsals will take place in the repetition rooms of the Drama Department at *Stellenbosch University*. The performances will be held in Drama Department's Lab. The two move-in dates are 18 and 19 June 2019, while the three show dates are 20, 21, and 22 June 2019. Times are yet to be confirmed. You *must* be available for the 18h – 22nd June 2019.
- *keep a journal* of sorts of the rehearsal process, which the researcher will then use as part of their reflective research.
- conduct yourself *professionally* in the rehearsal process and performances.

III. POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

One discomfort for you may be video recordings or photos of yourself during the rehearsal process.

Another discomfort may come from the journal keeping and the confidentiality regarding the information in it.

IV. POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO THE SOCIETY

A possible benefit from this study is that after the performance, you will have a basic knowledge of South African Sign Language, which you will be able to use to a degree to communicate with deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

You will be involved in creating new entertainment material for a marginalized society.

You will have the opportunity to work as part of an ensemble. You will be able to improve your performance abilities and, in the process, learn new skills.

V. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will *not* receive any form of payment for taking part in this study.

VI. PROTECTION OF YOUR INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND IDENTITY

Any information you share with me during this study and that could possibly identify you as a participant will be protected.

Only I will have access to the video recordings taken in the rehearsals. I will use these recordings to evaluate and revisit moments during the creation process. The video recordings and photographs will be stored on my private external hard-drive, with a password encryption.

Regarding the archiving of the journal entries, if it is in handwritten form, the researcher will ask to borrow the pages for the duration of completing the thesis study, and then return the pages to you. The pages will be stored with my personal files. Should you decide to log your entries in a digital format, these files will be kept on the same hard-drive as the previously mentioned one, under the same circumstances.

I shall strive to keep your anonymity in the discussions of the process of the performance. However, as this is arts-based research and you will be involved in the creation of artistic material, should you choose to, I shall credit you by name in the findings.

You *will* be allowed to view the video recordings and photographs.

The results will be shared with my supervisor and the Master's examiners, and may thereafter be published by *Stellenbosch University* (which is open for the public).

All data obtained from the study will be stored on my personal external hard-drive that will be password encrypted (which only I shall have the code for). The data will be deleted five years after the completion of the research, should it be required.

VII. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you agree to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence – you will still be allowed to be part of the performance. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer and still remain in the study. I may withdraw you from this study if I have valid reasons for believing you are not honouring the agreed upon terms, or if I feel it is in your best interest not to be involved in the research any longer.

VIII. RESEARCHERS' CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact *Jamie Marais* at 18529607@sun.ac.za and/or the supervisor *Petrus du Preez* at cntr@sun.ac.za.

IX. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty.

You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

As the participant I confirm that:

- I have read the above information and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.
- All issues related to privacy and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide have been explained to my satisfaction.
- I understand and acknowledge that the three performances (20, 21, 22 June 2019) will be in the public domain.

By signing below, I _____ (*name of participant*), agree to take

part in this research study, as conducted by Jamie Marais.

I wish to remain anonymous / be credited by name (*circle which option you consent to*) when the process of the performance is discussed.

Signature of Participant

Date

DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

As the **principal investigator**, I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the participant. I also declare that the participant has been encouraged (and has been given ample time) to ask any questions. In addition, I would like to select the following option:

	The conversation with the participant was conducted in a language in which the participant is fluent.
	The conversation with the participant was conducted with the assistance of a translator (who has signed a non-disclosure agreement), and this “Consent Form” is available to the participant in a language in which the participant is fluent.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

7.2 Addendum B: Description of Signs

Signs are described using a variety of features. Below are the descriptions of the manual features which I shall be using in this thesis to describe the various signs.

7.2.1 Handshape

7.2.1.1 Finger selection

Finger selection only refers to four fingers, *not* the thumb. This is used to distinguish the active fingers. For example⁶¹:









 FLAT B Fig. A	 V(2) Fig. B	 INDEX(1) Fig. C	 C Fig. D
 FLAT F Fig. E	 8 HAND Fig. F	 5 HAND Fig. G	 CORNA Fig. H

Table 7. 1

Fig. A is four selected fingers.

Fig. B is one selected finger: index finger selected.

Fig. C is two selected fingers: index and middle selected.

Fig. D is four selected fingers.

Fig. E is 3 fingers selected: middle, ring and pinkie selected.

⁶¹ The following figures are from the 'Handshape Chart' from the *RealSASL* site (RealSASL, 2019).

Fig. F is two selected fingers: index and middle selected.

Fig. G is four selected fingers.

Fig. H is two selected fingers: index and pinkie selected.

7.2.1.2 Finger position

Finger positions can be explained using the following four descriptions: flexed/extended or bent, and together or spread. For example:









 <p>FLAT B</p> <p>Fig. A</p>	 <p>V(2)</p> <p>Fig. B</p>	 <p>INDEX (1)</p> <p>Fig. C</p>	 <p>C</p> <p>Fig. D</p>
 <p>FLAT F</p> <p>Fig. E</p>	 <p>8 HAND</p> <p>Fig. F</p>	 <p>5 HAND</p> <p>Fig. G</p>	 <p>CORNA</p> <p>Fig. H</p>

Table 7. 2

Fig. A is extended and together.

Fig. B is extended.

Fig. C is extended and spread.

Fig. D is bent and together.

Fig. E is extended and spread.

Fig. F is extended and spread.

Fig. H is extended and spread.

7.2.1.3 Finger movement

Finger movement refers to the contact the selected fingers make with the thumb, and it is described as open or closed. For example:









 FLAT B Fig. A	 V(2) Fig. B	 INDEX(1) Fig. C	 C Fig. D
 FLAT F Fig. E	 8 HAND Fig. F	 5 HAND Fig. G	 CORNA Fig. H

Table 7. 3

Fig. A, B, C and E are closed.

Fig. D, F, G and H are open.

7.2.2 Orientation

Orientation is described depending on the direction in which the palm and fingers point.

Some basic descriptions used are:

- Inwards: the palm is facing the body.
- Outwards: the palm is facing away from the body.
- Upwards: the palm is facing the sky.
- Downwards: the palm is facing the feet.

- Towards each other: the palms are facing each other.
- Vertical: the fingers are pointing up or down.
- Horizontal: the fingers are pointing forwards, left or right

7.2.3 *Location*

Location refers to the area where a sign is made. The four locations used are: head, upper body, neutral space and weak hand. The head includes the top of head to the chin. The upper body is considered the neck to the bust area, when there is hand-to-body contact. The neutral space is a relatively large area – it is generally where there is no hand-to-body contact, and these signs are usually signed a few centimetres away from the body. The weak hand is opposite to the writing, or dominant, hand.

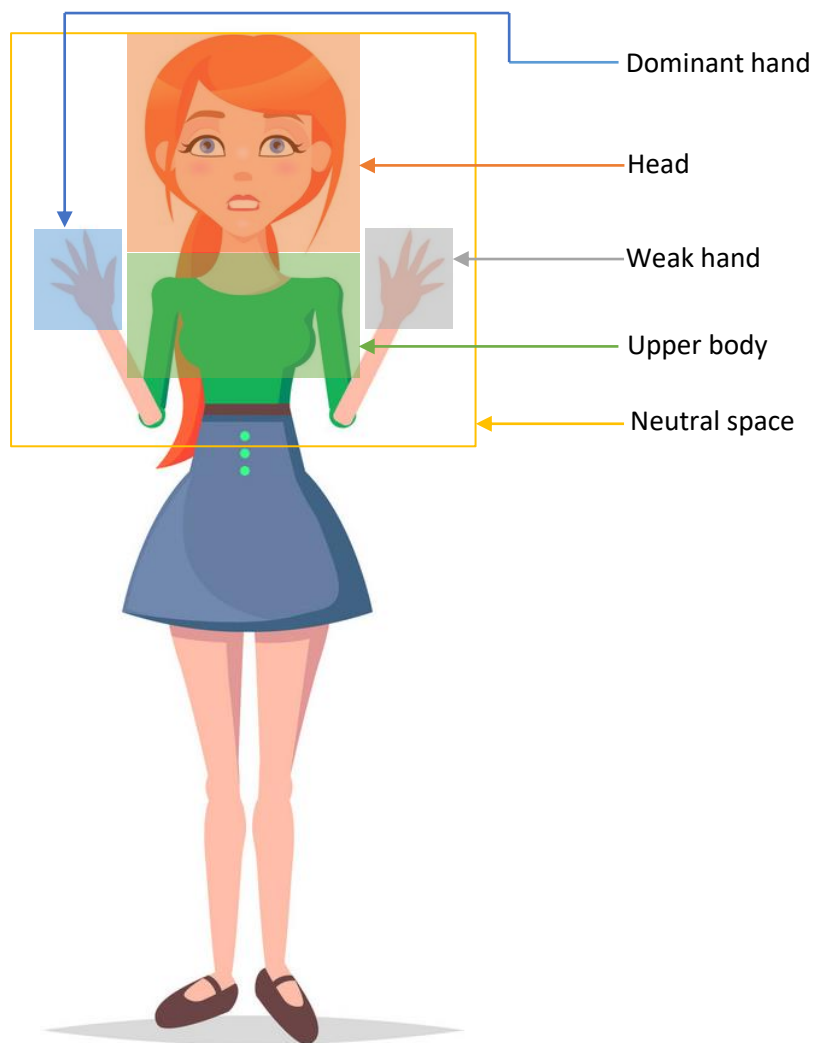


Figure 7. 1

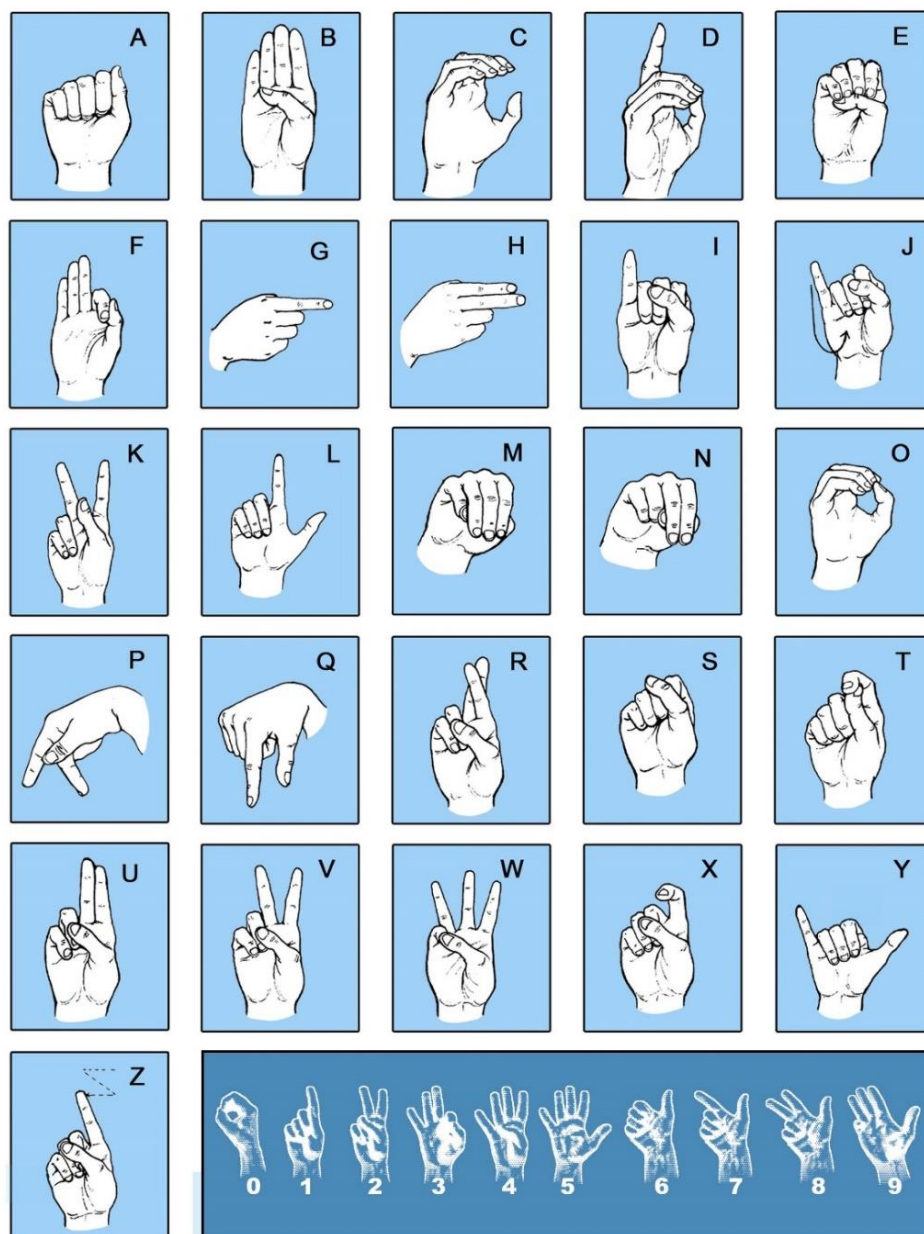
7.2.4 Movement

Movement of a sign includes the hand's internal movement, the change in orientation (fingers and wrist) and the path movement of the hand (the whole hand). If two hands are signing at once, they can have alternating movement or synchronised movement.

Movements can be singular, or repetitive in nature.

7.3 Addendum C: SASL Fingerspelling Alphabet And Numbers

SOUTH AFRICAN SIGN LANGUAGE FINGERSPELLING | SUID-AFRIKAANSE GEBARETAAL VINGERSPELING

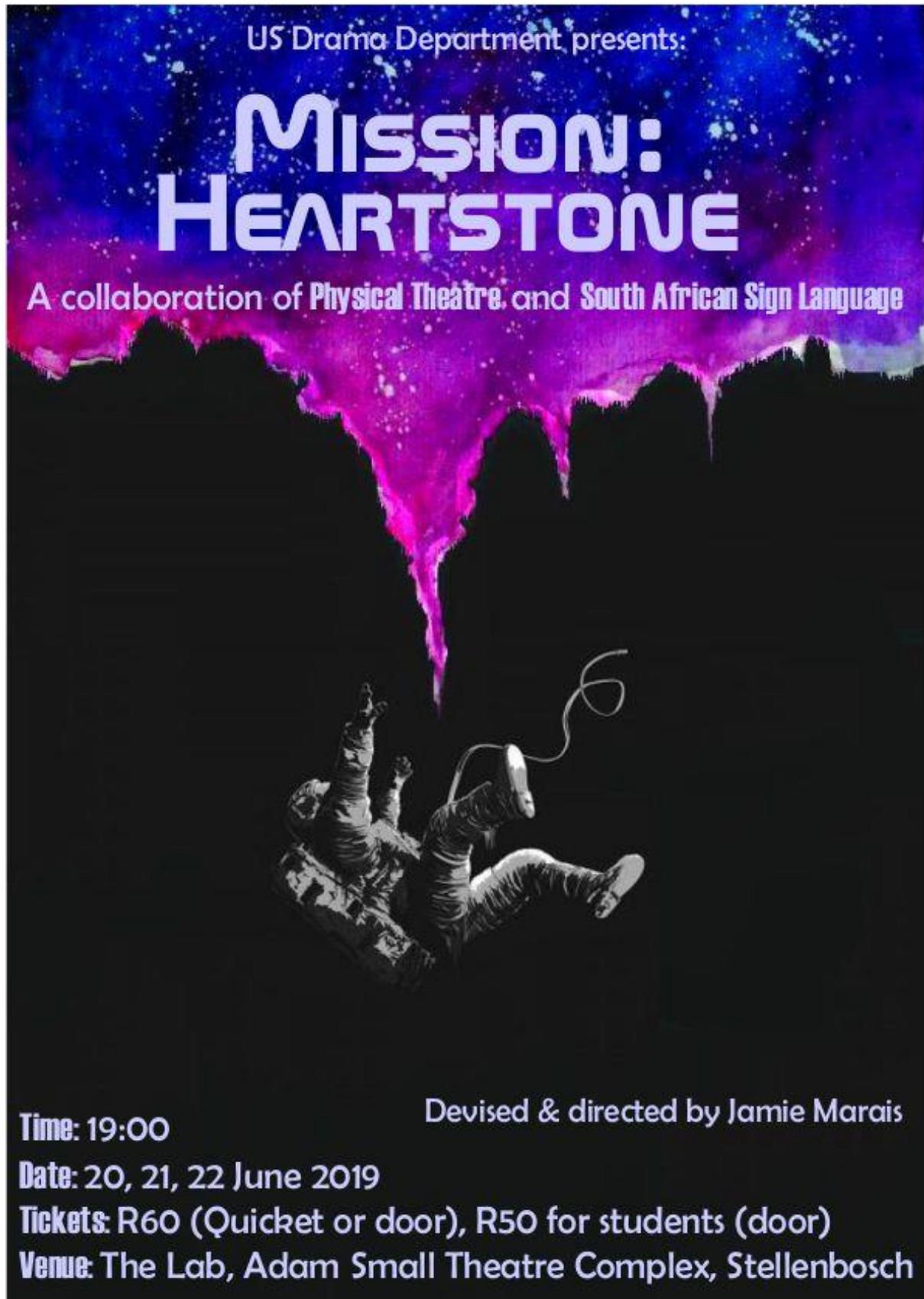


NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE DEAF
SINCE 1881

Table 7. 4

National Institute for the Deaf Fingerspelling Chart (NID, 2019).

7.4 Addendum D: Final Leaflet



Three astronauts travel into deep space. Their mission is to find and return an alleged precious stone with incredible properties. It contains minerals that can be used to return their home-planet, Earth, to its former unspoiled glory. Together they must work together, and brave treacherous landscapes. They will encounter sights that leave them in awe, and without words.

The show incorporates various Physical Theatre elements. Fragments of South African Sign Language (SASL) and British Sign Language (BSL) vocabulary are used in the performance.

CREW

Production Manger, Stage Manager
Lulu Heleen Kieser

Assistant Stage Manager
Nicolaas Joubert

**Nardrobe Co-Coordinator, Designer, Costumier,
Seamstress**
Mareleen Theron

Stage Designer
Alexander Brits

Technical Assistants
Emma Daly
Marloise du Plessis
Eduan van Niekerk
Zama Shongwe

CAST

Performers:
Jenna Breedt
Caleb Felix
Malaika Jones
Abigail Jonkers
Lindi Joubert
Lascelles Marais

Featuring the voices of:
Wyatt Afrika
Ansela Burger
Jeandré Spies

“There’s as many atoms in a single molecule of your DNA as there are stars in the typical galaxy. We are, each of us, a little universe.”

~ Neil deGrasse Tyson (Cosmos)



“Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious. And however difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at. It matters that you don't just give up.” ~ Stephen Hawking



“The Earth is a fine place and worth fighting for.” ~ Ernest Hemingway

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